ENGLAND'S Remembrancer:

BEING

A COLLECTION

OF

Farewel-Sermons,

Preached by divers

NON-CONFORMISTS

IN THE

COUNTRY.

Revel. 3. 3.

Remember how thou haſt received, and heard, and hold faſt-----

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London, Printed in the Year, 1663.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THe great Importunity of ſome ſerious Chriſtians hath been the occaſion of bringing theſe Notes to light; and a ſingular care not to wrong the Authors, hath procured as exact and perfect Copies, as could poſſibly be expected; excepting what Errata's *have happened in the Printing.*

They are not ſent forth upon any bad deſign; but it is very much deſired, and alſo hoped, that they may do good. When our Fields are not ſo fruitful, 'tis a comfort if our Garners are not quite empty, but that ſome of the old ſtore is left. When our ſpecial Boſom-Friends are at a diſtance, that we cannot ſee them, it's ſome ſatisfaction if we can here from them. When our ſins have driven ſo many of our Teachers into corners, that we cannot hear them in Publick, it may be ſome help to us, that this way we may converſe with them in our houſes ſtill.

And though it hath been the great ſin of many Engliſh *Profeſſors to luſt after* Quails, *to affect new airy Notions, and to loath heavenly* Manna, *becauſe it was common (how many of us, alas! that ſurfeted upon our plenty, thereby provoking the Lord to ſend years of ſcarcity) yet it is poſſible, that ſome by this time may have recovered their appetite to ſound and wholeſome Food: To ſuch the enſuing Sermons no doubt will be welcome.*

And is it not now high time to be ſenſible of what we have loſt? As Jeruſalem *in the dayes of her affliction remembred (with grief of heart) all her pleaſant things which ſhe had in the dayes of old,* Lam. 1.7. *They were ſorrowful for the* Solemn Aſſemblies, *whom the Lord Promiſed to gather, and bring again,* Zeph. 3. 18, 20.

And would it not be our wiſdom to make the beſt advantage of what we yet enjoy? If we are kept ſhorter in reſpect of Publick means, the greater ſhould be our care to improve all private helps. If we have leſs plain and practical Preaching, the more need to give attendance to Reading. If we are unfaithful in a little, why ſhould we be entruſted with more? were there never ſo many to be found amongſt us, that pray daily for the reſtoring of their Miniſters, yet while our unprofitableneſs that caſt them out, ſtill continues, there is little hope that prayer alone ſhould bring them in again.

And ſo the more we ſee amiſs abroad, ſhould it

not

not the more provoke us to reform at home? He that would have his Houſe a Bethel, *muſt ſee to the cleanſing of it; and put away thoſe things that would provoke the eyes of God's Glory. How ſhould an Holy God delight to dwell there, where Sin and Satan (his greateſt enemies) bear rule? Oh that our Houſes were indeed conſecreated as little Churches to his Service! ſurely, then the Lord himſelf would be a* little Sanctuary *to us; Yea, ſo we might hope further to ſee his Power and Glory, even as we have ſeen them in the* great Congregation. *They that joyn themſelves to the Lord, to ſerve Him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be His Servants: every one that keepeth the* Sabbath *from polluting it, the Lord hath Promiſed that He will bring them to His Holy* Mountain, *and make them joyful in* His Houſe of Praiſe, *Iſa. 56. 6, 7. O let us chuſe the things that pleaſe Him, as ever we would have our* Pleaſant things. *Indeed, was* [Holineſs to the Lord] *more engraven on us, then there would be greater hopes, that we ſhould yet poſſeſs the* Land, and inherit His Holy Mountain.

But (alas) what do we (any of us) crying out of the ſins of the times? what do we complaining of Diſorders and Corruptions in Church-Aſſemblies, *if in the mean time we neglect to reform diſorders at home in our Families; and overlook Corruptions in our own Hearts? Would*

not this bewray great Partiality and Hypocriſie?

Good Reader, *Be ſerious when thou vieweſt over theſe* Sermons. *Examine what thou readeſt, comparing it with the un-erring Rule of Sacred Writ. Turn to thoſe Texts of Scripture, where, for brevity ſake, the places are only noted, the words not recited. If thou comeſt with a ſober unprejudiced mind, thou wilt find here the words of Truth and Soberneſs. Theſe* Sermons, *moſt of them, were Preached and Heard with Sad and Mournful Hearts; O, do not thou bring a vain light ſpirit to the peruſal of them. They come forth recommended to the Bleſſing of God by Prayer; Let it be thy earneſt Prayer to God alſo, that thou mayeſt profit by Them. Without His Bleſſing all Means are ineffectual.*

If thou getteſt any Light or Heat, any Quickning or Comfort from them, bleſs the Lord for it, and be more mindful of theſe whom He hath covered with a Cloud in the Day of His Anger *: Who have ſometimes* Propheſied in Sackcloth, *and are now* cloathed in Sackcloth, *becauſe they may not* Propheſie. *O ſtrive together with them, in Prayers to God for them. What Great things have ſometimes been done by Prayer? By Prayer* Joſhua *commanded the Sun:* Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon *: And the Lord hearkned to the voice of a man. Sure we are, he that hath cauſed the Sun to go down upon ſo many of our* Prophets;

yea,

yea, hath caused their Sun to Set at Noon; He can so order it, that at evening time it shall be light, *Zech.* 14. 7.

Now Beg hard of God on the behalf of those who are Peaceable and Faithful in this our Israel; *that He who hath the hearts of Kings and all Men in His hand, would give those His Servants to find favour in the eyes of our King and Governours, that after the example of good* Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 30. 22. *they may countenance and encourage all such as would teach the good Knowledge of God in the* Land.

Erck. Greenhill.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. line 18. reade *fruitful.* P. 11. l. 2, 3. r. *To shew that Christians are to remember, how for the manner they.* P. 14. l. 33. r. *sorrow.* P. 17. l. 25. put out *to.* P. 21. l. 30. r. *wantonness,—deadness*; l. 31. r. *worldliness.* P. 23. l. 14. for *injoy*, r. *have.* P. 30. l. 30. r. *deserts.* P. 31. l. 22. dele *by their sins.* P. 39. l. 1. r. *another.* P. 47. l. 9. f. III. take 3. l. 27. r. μῦ. l. 33. r. *Loquitur.* P. 48. l. 24. r. *now that.* l. 32. r. *remove.* P. 53. l. 27. r. *reclinemus.* P. 58. l. 12. f. *this* r. *His.* P. 71. l. 13. dele *that.* P. 73. l. 21. r. ἀληθεία; l. *ult.* r. *several controversies.* P. 77. l. 9. r. *think themselves wise*; l. 15. r. *it is.* P. 60. l. 21. dele *to go.* P. 84. l. 20. r. *tendiculam*; l. 24. r. *Bonus.* P. 91. l. 18. r. *This is.* P. 94. l. 23. r. *halting*; l. 28. r. *so true.* P. 96. l. 31. r. *replentes.* P. 98. l. 18. r. *that answered*; l. 26. r. *go on.* P. 108. marg. r. *Tarnov.* P. 110. l. 17. f. *ye* r. *we.* P. 119. l. 34. r. *as to say.*

P. 120.

ERRATA.

P.120. l.6. r. ἀφθαρσῶς. P.122. l.15. r. *to be ſaved*; l. 16. dele *us*. P.125. l.33. r. *dearly*. P.126. l.17. f. *his*, r. *their*. P.129. l.3. r. *deny Chriſt*; l.10. r. *many of us Chriſtians*. P.135. l.32. f. *them*, r. *whom*. P.137. l.32. r. *others*. P.138. l.25. f. *dulce* r. *data*; l.26. r. *voluble*. P.140. l.2. f. *we*, r. *may*. P.150. l.6. r. *forbear*; l.11. dele *not*. P.152. l.25. r. *labitur & labetur*, &c. l.29. r. *indeſinenter*. P.157. l.20. r. *humane apprehenſion*. P.159. l.10,11. r. *exceed all expreſſions*. P.177. l.14. r. *reſtraint*. Correct the Figures from pag. 180 to 193. P.180. l.13. r. *old*. P.181. l.35. r. *vis unita*. P.185. l.32. r. *incollumen*. P.189. l.28. r. *heavineſs*. P.198. l.25. r. *individuum*. P.200. l.28. r. *minutatim*. P.204. l.1. dele *non*. P.206. l.22. r. *Authority*. P.207. l.1. r. *of Chriſt*. P.210. l.12. r. *as accompliſhed*. P.214. l.5. r. *Phil*. 1.23. P.215. l.1. r. ἐυλογίω. P.216. l.11. r. ἐυλογεῖν. P.224. l.15. r. *to do*. P.229. 31. r. μιχθήτω. P.231. l.30. r. *lay it not*. P.235. l.1. r. *a wrong*. P.241. l.2,3. r. *which they*. l.29. r. *double*. P.248. l.32. r. *from want*. P.260. l.16. r. *off from*. P.261. l.3. r. *but I haſten*. P.274. l.14. r. νενίκηκα. P.277. l.16. dele *as it were*: l.32. r. *his own*. P.279. l.14. f. *that*, r. *our*. l.22. dele *but*. P.282. l.16. r. *As when*. 283. l.14. r. *of ſuffering with Chriſt*. l.15. f. *image*, r. *death*. 285. l.23. r. *practiſe it*. l.29. r. *ſupply, and we ſhall overcome*. P.311. l.15. f. *Her*, r. *his*. 313. l. ult. r. *Midian*. 319. l.15. r. *Achaia*. 320. l.20. r. *glorying*. 326. l.15. r. *deſpondent*. l.17. r. πίσῃ. P.328. l.17. r. ἀγαθὸ. 336. l.12. r. *burnt offerings*. 345. l.16. r. *God makes*. 368. l.15. r. *inferiour world*. 394. l.13. r. *Croſs of Chriſt*. P.416. l.14. r. *improve*. 422. l.12. *Troublers*. P.431. l.32. r. *Not mentioning*. 448. l.9,10. r. *againſt the Mountains*. 451. l.11. r. *Security*. 452. l.25. r. *warm*. 456. l.22. r. *your own*. 464. l.18. r. *have not*.

There are other faults beſides, but theſe eſpecially are to be corrected.

SER-

SERMON I.

Preached, Friday June 27. 1662. by Mr. John Whitlock. St. Mary's. Nottingham

Revel. 3. v. 3.

Remember therefore how thou haſt received, and heard, and hold faſt and repent, &c.

I Have gone through the whole ſecond Chapter of this Book, and the two firſt verſes of this, in my courſe of preaching the *Friday-Lecture*. I ſhall enter upon this third verſe at this time by God's aſſiſtance. The words contain further counſel and direction given by our Saviour Chriſt to this Church of *Sardis*, in order to her recovery from that formality and ſpiritual deadneſs ſhe was ſunk into. Two Directions Chriſt had given her in the ſecond verſe; *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen, &c.* There are three more added in this, *Remember*, &c. *hold faſt, and repent.* The third in order, and firſt laid down in this verſe, is, to remember; *Remember therefore how thou haſt received, and heard.* This is preſcribed as a means to recover them from their ſpiritual decayes and deadneſs, and to cure them of that formality & hypocriſie they had been guilty of. Chriſt had told them in the former verſes, that *they had a name to live, but were dead, and that their works were not perfect or full before God.* Now the way to cure them of theſe diſtempers, was, to *remember how they had received, and heard*; implying that it was forgetfulneſs of thoſe Truths, Rules and Directions they had received in, and heard from the Word of God that was the cauſe of their declining, and that

the way to recover vigour and livelineſs in Religion, and to fill up their works, was, *to remember how they had received, and heard.* So that the way to bring either Churches or perſons to their former vigour in Religion, and to a thorow-reformation of things amiſs, is to bring all things to the *Teſt* of God's Word, to weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and to try them by thoſe Divine Truths they have formerly received and heard. Briefly to explain the words.

Remember.] This may be taken, firſt, for the act of that particular faculty of the ſoul, called *Reminiſcentia* or Memory: and ſo to remember, is to recollect or call back a thing or object, formerly heard, received, and laid up in the Memory.

Secondly, It may be taken for an act of the Judgement, and ſo to *remember*, is, ſeriouſly to weigh and conſider Truths formerly received and heard: and it may be well underſtood here, ſo as to take in both ſenſes.

How thou haſt received] πῶς. Some render it ποῖα *qualia*, and would have it refer to the quality of the things or truths they had received and heard. Remember what Doctrines were delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, what kind of Worſhip was inſtituted and practiſed by them. This ſenſe of the words I ſhall not exclude, but the word relates rather to the manner how Truths and Ordinances were delivered to them, and received by them. Several Doctrines might be raiſed from the words.

Doct. 1. *That one great cauſe of declining in Religion both in Churches and particular Chriſtians, is the forgetfulneſs of thoſe Truths they have formerly received and heard; the forgetting what and how they have received and heard.*

Doct. 2. *That the beſt way to recover and reform a declining*

clining Church or perſon, is to bring them back to the Rule of God's Word, which they have received and heard, to reduce both Doctrine, Worſhip and Practices to the firſt Inſtitution, as it is contained in the Scriptures.

There are other Doctrines that I might raiſe and inſiſt on from theſe words; but I ſhall ſum up all I intend to ſpeak from this direction, in this one Doctrine.

Doct. *That it is the duty of Churches and particular Chriſtians, and a ſpecial means to recover them from formality, declinings and deadneſs in Religion, and the exerciſe of Grace, to remember what and how they have received and heard.* Chriſtians ſhould remember old Truths that they have received and heard long ago. They ſhould remember what Truths they have heard, and what Ordinances they have injoyed, and alſo after what manner Truths and Ordinances have been diſpenſed to them, and received by them. It is our duty to take care we be not forgetful hearers; that we ſuffer not Truths to ſlip out of our minds. Hearing and receiving Truths and Ordinances, is not the *All* of a Chriſtians duty. There muſt be alſo (as the Text tells us) a *remembring how we have received and heard.*

In handling this Doctrine I ſhall obſerve this method. 1. Prove the Doctrine from Scripture. 2. Explicate it, and therein ſhew both what it is to remember, and what it is we are to remember. 3. Give reaſons of the Doctrine. 4. Apply it.

Firſt, For the Scripture-proof of this Doctrine, ſee this duty enjoyned to *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. and the particular directions there given were in order to the furthering of this great Duty in the Text, namely, *remembring how they had received and heard.* This duty is further preſſed, *Prov.* 6. 21. *Prov.* 7. 1, 2, 3. *Iſa.* 42. 23. *Who will hearken and hear for the time to*

come? Now if men ſhould hear for the time to come, then they muſt remember what they have formerly heard: for, no more will be ours in the time to come, but what we ſhall have (at leaſt) a ſavoury practical remembrance of. And as this is a duty commanded, ſo it hath been conſcientiouſly practiſed by the Saints of God: See the great care of *David* in the diſcharge of this duty, *Pſal.* 119. 11, 15, 48, 97. And ſo alſo the Virgin *Mary*, *Luke* 2. 51. and in many other places, is ſaid *to have pondred and laid up the ſayings of Chriſt in her heart.* The Memory is the ſtorehouſe and treaſury of the ſoul, in which her ſpiritual treaſures are laid up. There are three things (ſaith * one) we ſhould be very careful to keep in our remembrance; *former ſins, to make and keep us humble; former mercies, to make us thankful; former Truths and Ordinances to make us ~~faithful~~ fruitful.*

* *Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick.*

2. The ſecond general is, to explicate the Doctrine, and there firſt to ſhew what it is to remember. That I ſhall but name.

Firſt; To remember, is to recollect and call to mind. This is our duty in reference to what we have received and heard. We muſt recollect, call to mind, and ruminate upon Divine Truths, formerly received: we muſt (as it were) chew the cud. This is the way to make ſound and clean Chriſtians. It is the ſimiſitude *Chryſoſtom* uſeth: "They were clean beaſts under the "Law (at leaſt that was one requiſit to make them ſo) "that chewed the cud; and he is like to make a holy "ſpiritual Chriſtian, that delivers Truth to his Me-"mory whilſt he hears it, and is able and careful to "call it to mind again afterward.

Secondly, To remember what we have received and heard, is not only to recollect, but alſo ſeriouſly to weigh

weigh and conſider Truths, and bring them home to our hearts by particular application.

3. The third general, is, to ſhew to you what it is that Chriſtians are thus to remember. This I ſhall open under two heads. Firſt, ſhew it is the duty of Chriſtians to remember *what they have received and heard* for the matter: 2dly, *how they have received and heard* as to the manner.

Firſt, *It is the duty of Chriſtians to remember what Truths and Ordinances they have received, and been made partakers of.* And if any ask what Truths ſhould be remembred? I anſwer, That every Truth of God is precious, and ought to be treaſured up by us in our hearts. No one Truth ought careleſly to be let ſlip. The very fragments of Divine Truth ſhould be taken up, that none of them be loſt. The very duſt of Gold is precious. There is not the leaſt Truth that ever any of you heard or received, but may be of uſe to you at ſome time or other. But there are ſome Truths which we ſhould be moſt eſpecially carefull to remember, namely, the main Foundation-Truths, and ſuch as are moſt neceſſary to Salvation.

1. It is the duty of Chriſtians, and a ſpecial means both to keep and recover them from formality and deadneſs in Religion, to be very careful to retain in their memories thoſe Fundamental Doctrines and Principles of Religion they have received and heard, that are contained in the Scriptures, and have been opened, confirmed, and applied from them, in expounding, preaching, catechiſing, and ſuch other Ordinances as you have enjoyed. You muſt labour to remember old ſavoury Truths that you have heard many years ſince; Chriſtians ſhould chew them over again by meditation. This is the courſe Chriſt directs his Church to in the Text, to recover them from dead-

neſs in Religion. He doth not bid them look after new Notions and high Speculations, for theſe will but puff up the minds of men, and not enliven them; but he bids them *remember how they had received and heard.* The like direction *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 1. 13, 14. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt received of me, &c.* The vital Doctrines of *Faith in Jeſus Chriſt*, and concerning the *Perſon*, *Natures*, *Offices*, and *Benefits* of Chriſt, with the Truths depending on theſe: Oh! theſe ſhould never be forgotten by thoſe who have received them. And alſo the vivifical Doctrines of *Repentance from dead works*, *Love towards God* and *our neighbours*. You have heard theſe Truths opened, confirmed, and applied to you many and many a time, both from the mouths of former Miniſters now dead and gone, and ſuch whoſe labours you have occaſionally enjoyed. And I truſt that we alſo, whoſe Miniſtry among you is now towards a period, may ſay as *Paul* when he was taking leave of the *Epheſians*, Acts 20. 20, 21, 26, 27. though we acknowledge in great weakneſs, and with many mixtures of ſin. Well, beloved, It is your duty to remember theſe Truths you have heard; and the rather, becauſe time may come, either by reaſon of the hand of God in a way of ſickneſs upon you, or God may ſend a famine, or if not, a ſcarſity of the Word upon a People for their ſinful abuſe of former plenty, and then when you may not have ſo frequently and abundantly the Word afreſh opened and applied to you, it will be of great uſe to remember what and how you have received and heard. If old Errors ſhould be broached under the notion of new Truths, Chriſtians ſhould bring them to the ſtandard of God's Word (according to that, *Iſa.* 8. 20.) of what you have received and heard. If any ſhall go about to cry up Doctrines of conditional decrees, mans

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free-will, falling from Grace, or the like; if you remember what you have heard, you will be able to say, *We have not ſo learned Chriſt.*

2. It is the duty of Chriſtians, and a means to recover them from deadneſs and formality of Religion, to remember as the Doctrines of the Goſpel they have received and heard, ſo alſo what they have received and heard in and from the Word of God concerning the Worſhip of God, and the Adminiſtration of Goſpel-Ordinances, and to bring all things impoſed and practiſed in Divine Worſhip, to the Rule of God's Word; to enquire whether they be ſuch things as have the warrant of the Command of Chriſt, or practice of the Apoſtles of Chriſt. It hath been the deſign of Satan, and the work of the corrupt hearts of men in all Ages, to be making Additions to the Commands of Chriſt, and to be mingling mens Inventions with the Inſtitutions of Chriſt in matters of Worſhip. Churches are very apt to degenerate from plain Spiritual Worſhip, and the ſimplicity of the Goſpel of Chriſt into a name to live, a meer outward form of Religion, and a gay and pompous way of worſhipping God, ſuch as may moſt pleaſe the fleſh and fancy of men. Now in ſuch a caſe it is the duty of God's People, *to remember how they have received and heard.* They ſhould remember that God hath ſaid *he will be worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth*, Joh. 4. 23, 24. and what Chriſt hath ſaid, *Mat.* 15. 3, 10. and *Mark* 7. 7, 8, 9. Reade theſe Scriptures at leiſure. This was Chriſt's Doctrine. And when the Church was very much degenerated, God bids them, *(Jer.* 6. 16) *Aſk for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.* Not the old paths of Cuſtom, Tradition, the opinion and practice of forefathers; but thoſe wayes that are as old as your Bibles are, as the Word of God and the Goſpel is; for theſe

are the *good old way*. Other wayes may be *old*, but not *good*. When things of mens deviſing are put upon men, and crowded into God's Worſhip, Chriſtians ſhould run to their Bibles, and ask, *Was it ſo from the beginning?* Did Chriſt and his Apoſtles preach, pray, adminiſter and receive Sacraments thus? how did they appoint them to be diſpenſed? Chriſtians ſhould account it wiſdom enough to follow their direction and example. Certainly they worſhipped God decently, yet they contented themſelves with what they had received of the Lord, without making additions of their own. When any thing is obtruded upon God's People in matters of Worſhip, they ſhould try all things by the Word of God. It is a ſaying of *Cyprian* to this purpoſe, in an Epiſtle of his; *Si canalis aquam ducens ſubito deficiat, nonne ad fontem pergitur? &c.* If the Conduit-pipe or Ciſtern which was wont to give forth water plentifully, ſuddenly ſtop, do not men go to the Fountain to find out the cauſe, whether the Fountain be dry, or the veins ſtopped? &c. *Sic oportet facere Dei ſacerdotes ſi in aliquo nutaverit aut vacillaverit veritas, ad originem Dominicam, & Evangelicam, & Apoſtolicam traditionem revertamur, &c.* Let us return to the Word and Goſpel, and Apoſtolical tradition; that which is truly ſo called, and can be proved from undiſputable authority to be ſuch. This is a ſafe Rule, and the way to keep Churches from corruption, and rightly to reform them if they be in any thing corrupted.

3. It is the duty of Chriſtians, and a means to recover them from ſpiritual deadneſs, *to remember what they have received and heard, for the directing of their practice, and ordering of their converſations.* They ſhould remember practical Truths, the Commands, Counſels, Exhortations, Directions they have found in and heard from the Word of God. Theſe ſhould be had in

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everlasting remembrance. They are to be remembred by Christians all their dayes, and never to be forgotten. Though some notions should through weakness slip out of your minds, yet practical Truths should be written not in the dust, but on your hearts, as on marble, & engraven as with the point of a diamond, never to be razed out. Oh Beloved, many, many of these have you received and heard. You have been pressed unto publick, family, secret, relative duties: you have been directed how you should hear, reade, pray, confer, receive Sacraments: how you should carry your selves as Magistrates, Ministers, People, Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, Masters, Servants; in commerce, traffique and dealings with men. Oh remember these things. And especially, if such times should come when you may not hear so much and often of these things as heretofore you have done.

4. It is the duty of Christians *to remember the reproofs and warnings against sin they have received and heard.* The remembrance of these will be a means to keep you from sin. You have been many times warned to take heed of sin, as a most venemous Serpent, and the most inveterate enemy both of God and of your own souls. God hath sent his Messengers rising early, to warn you to take heed of all sin. You have been warned to beware of Prophaness, Sabbath-breaking, Error, Superstition, yea and of Hypocrisie, Formality, Deadness, Apostacy; you should remember what and how you have received and heard, so as to take heed of these and all other sins, and especially when you shall be in an hour of temptation, when these sins may be rife & common, and grow in fashion.

5. It is the duty of Christians, and a means both to keep and recover from deadness, *to remember the forewarnings they have had of God's Judgments.* You have been

been told of God's Judgments againſt ſin in general, and againſt ſuch and ſuch ſins in particular. You have been told of Afflictions, Sufferings, Perſecutions that you muſt look for. You have been told of theſe in the written Word, and by Gods Miniſters. And you ſhould eſpecially remember theſe, when you ſee Judgments coming, or feel them already executed. Remember thoſe warnings in the Word of God, *John* 16. 1,2,3, 4, 33. *Acts* 14. 22. 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. O Chriſtians, you have been forewarned that Error in Judgment, Wantonneſs in Opinion and Practice under the Goſpel, loathing of *Manna*, would bring a famine of the Word, that decayes in and leaving of *firſt Love* would cauſe God to remove his Candleſtick, that deadneſs and formality would cauſe God to come, *as a thief in the night*, to take away the Goſpel, and all your precious things. O therefore Chriſtians, when you ſee ſuch Judgments coming, or feel them upon you, remember what and how you have received & heard: and this *Remembrance* will be a ſpecial means to bring you to Repentance.

6. And laſtly, It is the duty of Chriſtians, *to remember the comforts they have received in, and heard from the Word of God*; thoſe grounds of comfort, precious Cordials, and ſtrong Conſolations you have read and heard to bear up your hearts under the ſence of ſin, and apprehenſions of God's wrath, and in a time of diſſertion, and againſt the fierce and fiery aſſaults of Satan, the ſtrength of corruption, weakneſs of grace, difficulty of duty, as alſo under afflictions from God, and ſufferiugs and perſecutions from men. This will be a means to keep the hearts and hopes of Chriſtians alive in the ſaddeſt conditions they can be brought into. It will be of great uſe in an evil day. And thus I have ſhewed you what it is for the *matter* Chriſtians are chiefly and eſpeciallp to remember.

Secondly,

Secondly. For the further explication of the duty in the Doctrine, I come now to ſhew ~~how, for the manner~~ *that*, Chriſtians are to *remember how they have received and heard.* And this is more expreſly ſpoken of in the Text, and that under two heads. 1. They are to remember how Truths have been delivered to them, and Ordinances diſpenſed amongſt them. 2. How and after what manner they have received and imbraced the Truths and Ordinances of God.

Firſt, *It is the duty of Chriſtians to remember how the Word of God hath been preached and Ordinances diſpenſed to them*; and that in theſe four particulars.

1. *Chriſtians ſhould remember how plainly and in what ſimplicity of the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Word, Sacraments, and other Ordinances have been diſpenſed; how cloſe and home the Word of God hath been brought to their hearts and conſciences.* This the Apoſtle *Paul* often minds thoſe of, to whom he writes, and this as a means to keep them from being taken with flouriſhes, external pomp, and empty things in Religion, 1 *Cor.* 2. five firſt verſes; As if he had ſaid to them, as I may ſay to you, You have not been fed with gingling expreſſions, meer flouriſhes of Rhetorick, or empty ſpeculations, but with plain and wholſom Truths: you have had Ordinances not in the dreſs of mens inventions, but in the *ſimplicity of the Goſpel*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 2. *Paul* was very jealous leſt men ſhould be drawn from the ſimplicity of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2, 3. So that I ſay, the remembrance of the plainneſs and ſimplicity, in which the Goſpel hath been diſpenſed among men, will be a means to keep them from being taken with a meer outſide Religion and way of Worſhip.

2. *It is the duty of Chriſtians, to remember how purely you have received and heard, with what purity the Word, Sacraments and other Ordinances have been delivered, and*

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dispensed without the mixtures of mens inventions; how you have received the sincere milk of the Word without sophistication, and Sacraments without any of the sinful additions of mens own devising. Thus you have received them in the Scriptures: thus Christ and his Apostles delivered them; and so have faithful Ministers, their successors, endeavoured to do. 1 *Cor.*11.23,24. *That which I have received of the Lord, I have delivered unto you. Paul*, though an Apostle, added nothing of his own head. 2 *Cor.*2.17. and 2 *Cor.*4.2. Oh Christians, it is your duty to remember this, and will be a means to make you in love with, and adhere to, pure Ordinances, and fortifie you against all sophistications of them, when you see men corrupting of them, or adding to them.

3. *It is the duty of Christians to remember how powerfully they have received and heard, with what power the Word hath been preached and Ordinances dispensed among you*; not so as to tickle your ears and please your fancies, but to reach your hearts, come home to and work upon your consciences: *how the Gospel came to you not in word, but in power*, 1 Thess. 1.5. *commending it self to your consciences*, as the Apostle phraseth it, 2 *Cor.*4.2. Hath not the speech and preaching of the faithful Ministers of Christ among you, in some measure been, as *Paul* saith his was, *not with enticing words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and in power*, 1 *Cor.*2.4? Have not you found the weapons of your spiritual warfare, such as *Paul* mentions, 2 *Cor.*10.4, 5. *even mighty through God?* Oh! Christians should never forget this, but continually remember it all their dayes.

4. *It is the duty of Christians to remember how plentifully they have received and heard; in what great plenty they have enjoyed the Word and Ordinances of God.* Oh Christians,

Chriſtians, you ſhould remember what dews, yea, ſhowers of heavenly Manna God hath rained about your tents; ye have not been ſtraitned in God. If you be ſtraitned it is in your ſelves, even in your own bowels. The heart and mouth of God, yea and the hearts and mouths of God's Miniſters they have been opened and enlarged to you, 2 *Cor.* 6. 11, 12. You have had the Word *in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon*, the Word frequently preached, and Sacraments frequently adminiſtred; you have had *line upon line*, and *precept upon precept*. Chriſtians ſhould remember how much *planting and watering* they have had. You ſhould remember, Chriſtians, what great pains, coſt and charges God hath been at with your ſouls to bring you home to himſelf at the firſt, and to make and keep you lively and fruitful ever ſince; O keep this for ever in your minds, as a means to make you lively and fruitful.

Secondly, *It is the duty of Chriſtians, to remember, as how Truths and Ordinances have been diſpenſed, ſo alſo how and after what manner they have been heard, received and imbraced by them.* This will be a means to keep the heart lively, and to keep from degenerating into deadneſs and formality in Religion, and in the Service of God. And this in ſeveral particulars.

1. It is the duty of Chriſtians, and a means to keep and recover them from deadneſs, *to remember how ſeriouſly, with what ſeriouſneſs of ſpirit they attended on the Service of God and holy duties, at their firſt entertaining of them.* Chriſtians at firſt are wont to wait on Ordinances as matters of great weight and moment, yea as matters of life and death, to read, hear, pray, meditate, receive Sacraments as for their very lives, and as if every one were the laſt they ſhould enjoy. So thoſe hearers of Chriſt received the Word, *Luk.* 19. 48. they hung upon his lips, received the Word as the

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Word of God. Christians, this should be remembred by you, especially when you grow slighty and formal, you should say to your souls, It was not wont to be thus with me, I was not wont to hear, pray, receive Sacraments in this formal manner. This remembring how you have received, will be a means to keep your hearts lively, and to cure you of spiritual deadness.

2. Christians should remember *how they have received and heard*; namely, with what high estimations and appreciations of the Word and Ordinances you heard and received them; how highly you prized the Word and the Dispensers of it; how you ran after them, as those who see the Sun but one half of the year are ready to run after it, and even to adore it upon its first approach. Did you not esteem the Ambassadors of Christ, even as the Angels of God? *How beautiful were the feet of them that bring glad-tydings?* Were you not ready to do as those *Galatians*, Gal. 4. 15? When at any time you feel your estimations to abate, of the Word, Ordinances and Ministers of Christ, Oh then remember how you have received; say to your hearts, Are Ordinances worse than they were? Is there any change in the Word? or rather, am not I grown worse? Is not the change in my own wretched heart? The remembrance of this will be a means both to keep and recover you from deadness.

3. It is the duty of Christians *to remember with what lively affections they heard and received the Word and Ordinances of God; the difficulties they were ready to break through to enjoy them, the fight of afflictions they were ready to endure.* So Christians, you should do as you are exhorted, *Heb.* 10. 32. Remember what baths of godly sorrow and compunction of spirit you found in hearing; what earnest pantings after Christ and his Ordinances. Could you not once say, as the Psalmist,

Psal.

Pſal. 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2. & 84. 1, 2. Remember what flames of Divine Love to God, Jeſus Chriſt and his People, you once felt burning in your hearts. Remember thoſe Raptures of Joy you have felt, while you have been with joy drawing Waters out of the Wells of Salvation. Remember with what delight and complacency you converſed in holy duties, what zeal you had for God and his Miniſters; how even *the zeal of Gods houſe eat you up.* O when you begin to feel your affections cool and grow flat, ſay, Why am I thus? Is not God and Chriſt as lovely and deſirable, the Wayes of God as delightfull and pleaſant as ever? Such a remembrance, how you have received, will be a means to keep up a lively frame of heart in moſt dead times.

4. Chriſtians ſhould remember *with what readineſs of mind they heard and received the Word of God; with what holy reſolutions to obey the Truth, and to give up themſelves to be guided by it, and to walk with God, to live and die in Gods wayes, and for them too if God called them to it.* Thus God's People have received the Word. So did thoſe mentioned *Iſa.* 2. 2, 3. & *Acts* 10. 33. and ſo have you, if ever you received it ſavingly. Oh remember this, as a means to quicken you when you find holy reſolutions to cool in you.

5. Chriſtians ſhould remember *with what impreſſions upon their hearts they have received the Word and Sacraments.* Oh remember, Chriſtians, what impreſſions Truths and Ordinances were wont to leave upon your hearts, what work they made in your ſouls, what wounds were given to ſin, what heart-meltings and heart-revivings you have found, while one while your hearts have been melted, yea even diſſolved into penitential tears, and another while filled with raptures of ſpiritual joy. What workings of Faith, Love, Deſires?

ſires? Hath it not been thus with you ſometimes Chriſtians? Oh remember this, to quicken you when you grow dead, and can, yea do, ſit under Ordinances with few, if any, ſuch impreſſions as theſe are.

6. And laſtly, *Remember with what efficacy you have heard and received the Word and Ordinances of God.* You ſhould remember what gracious effects have been wrought in, and produced on your ſouls by theſe. Oh Chriſtians, you ſhould remember what good you have got by the Word, Sacraments, Prayer, Communion of Saints: what communion with God you have enjoyed in them, and what of God you have received by and through them; what quicknings, what comforts you have been made partakers of, while you have been attending upon them. Have you not found the Word and Sacraments, and other Ordinances of God, wounding, yea killing your corruptions, enabling you to overcome temptations, ſtrengthening of grace, enabling you to duty? Hath not God ſpoken Peace to your ſouls in and through theſe? Hath he not adminiſtred comfort to your ſouls in times of diſſertion under ſore afflictions, againſt moſt bitter ſufferings, and moſt hot and fiery perſecutions? Oh remember this, to keep your hearts alive in, and your love warm and lively unto thoſe precious Truths and Ordinances you have received ſo much good through, how much ſoever they may be deſpiſed and ſcorn'd by others.

SERMON II.

Preached, Lords-day, *July* 6. 1662. *by Mr. John Whitlock.*

Rev. 3. 3. *Remember therefore how thou haſt received, and heard, and hold faſt, and repent, &c.*

BEloved, when I entred on this verſe in my courſe of the *Friday-Lecture*, I little thought that I had ſo ſhort a time to preach among you. I hoped I ſhould have enjoyed ſome further opportunities for ſome few weeks, at leaſt as long as the *Act of Uniformity* allowes. But it hath pleaſed God by his wiſe and holy Providence to order it otherwiſe, I being ſuſpended from preaching here, from this day forward, for *Nonconformity*: how regularly or legally on mans part, I ſhall not diſpute, but leave to the righteous God to determine. I deſire that both you and I may not eye man, but God in this diſpenſation. I did not think to have preached my *Farewel-Sermon* to you from theſe words; but having begun this Text, and finding the matter of it ſo ſeaſonable and ſuitable to this ſad occaſion, I ſhall by God's aſſiſtance proceed in the handling of it. Being probably like to preach no more unto you, I judge it very ſeaſonable to leave the Exhortation in the Text with you, to call upon you, that you would *remember what and how you have received, and heard, and hold faſt* thoſe wholſom Truths you have heard, and thoſe precious Ordinances (at leaſt the remembrance, impreſſions, and gracious effects of them) that you have enjoyed and been priviledged with; and alſo to repent of thoſe ſins, which have provoked, and may further provoke God *to come on us as a thief*, to take away many of his Miniſters from

among us. The words as I have already ſhewed, are Chriſts counſel to a languiſhing Church, and to decaied Chriſtians, to repair decaied Godlineſs and Religion in a Church, and in the hearts and lives of particular Chriſtians, which renders them more ſeaſonable to theſe days we live in, and to the condition of many of our ſouls. I have already opened the Doctrine, and confirm'd it by ſeveral Scriptures; Namely, *That it is the duty both of Churches and particular Chriſtians, and a ſpecial means to recover them from formality, decaies and deadneſs in Religion and the exerciſe of Grace, to remember what and how they have received and heard.* I ſhould now proceed to give you the reaſons of the Doctrine, but I ſhall chuſe rather to reſerve them to the Application, and then preſs them, as Motives to inforce the Counſel and Exhortation grounded on the Text and Doctrine; and ſo ſhal immediately proceed to Application.

Uſe 1. The firſt Uſe is of *Information.*

1. It informs us, that there is ſomewhat more required of Chriſtians, than bare hearing of Sermons, receiving and partaking of Sacraments, and other Ordinances. It is not enough *to hear* and *receive*, but it is the duty of Chriſtians alſo *to remember what and how they have received and heard*; what good they have got by, and what communion with God they have injoyed in the uſe of the Word and Ordinances.

2. It informs us, what it is we are to make the rule of our Faith & Practice, namely, *the Word of God contained in the Scriptures, and the Truths you have heard, rightly grounded theron.* They ought to be the Standard to which we ſhould bring all Doctrines preached, all things introduced into Divine Worſhip, and impoſed upon us in practice. Bring all things to this *Teſt.* It is your duty to ſearch and ſtudy the Scriptures, and bring all things *to*

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the Law and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to theſe, it is becauſe there is no light in them. You muſt not believe every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they be of God. When either Doctrine or Worſhip is corrupted in a Church, the way to reform both, is not to fly to humane Authority or Antiquity, but to the golden Rule of the Word; this is the only ſafe Rule. Other rules may erre, but this is infallible.

Uſe 2. The ſecond Uſe is of *Reproof*, To reprove forgetful hearers, ſuch as ſeem very eager in hearing and receiving Divine Truths, & attending on Goſpel-Ordinances, but are not careful to remember what, and how they have received and heard; ſuch who return not on the things they have heard, but leave all behind them. *Such* (as a Divine expreſſeth it) *who come from Duties as from a Grave, where they leave their deareſt Friends behind them, not as from a Dole from whence they carry ſomewhat with them.* Of ſuch hearers as theſe the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks, *Jam.* 1. 22, 23, 24. Yet I ſpeak not here, of that forgetfulneſs, which proceeds meerly from weakneſs, which is bewailed, and is the burden of their ſouls. This is indeed an infirmity to be bewailed; yet deſerves rather pity and compaſſion from men, than reproof: but the forgetfulneſs this Doctrine reproves, is that which proceeds from careleſneſs; when men do not make conſcience of the duty preſſed in the Text; namely, *remembring how they have received and heard.*

Uſe 3. But the third and laſt Uſe of this Doctrine, which I ſhall further make and inſiſt on, is a *Uſe of Exhortation, To exhort all of you to the practice of the Duty in the Text.* Oh labour to remember what and how you have received and heard. I am like no more to ſpeak to you publickly in the Name of the Lord. Let me therefore leave this Counſel and Exhortation with you,

as that which may be of great uſe to you, in hours of temptation that may come upon you. I beſeech you, Beloved, by the mercies of God, in the bowels of Chriſt, and out of the reſpect you bear to your own precious and immortal ſouls, that you would labour and endeavour to remember thoſe ſoul-ſaving Truths and precious Ordinances you have received, heard and enjoyed, and thoſe impreſſions you have felt upon your hearts from them. Oh be not forgetful hearers! let not the Truths of God ſlip out of your minds. Beloved, I may ſay to you, there is ſcarce any Truth neceſſary to ſalvation but you have heard of it, once and again from ſome or other of Gods Meſſengers that have been ſent unto you, though not without the mixtures of ſin and weakneſſe, as to the inſtruments (which God in mercy pardon.) You have heard what God is, and how he will be worſhiped, even in ſpirit and in truth, and not according to the inventions and traditions of men; you have heard the Doctrine of God's Decrees, and of his works of Creation and Providence opened and applied. You have heard of the ſinful and miſerable condition of a man in a natural condition. You have heard the Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, and of the means of our recovery by Chriſt alone. You have had Chriſt ſet before you in his Perſon, Natures, Offices, Obedience, Sufferings. You have heard many other both Theoretical and Practical Truths ſet before you in Preaching, Expounding, Catechiſing; and by theſe you have been antidoted againſt Popiſh, Socinian, and Arminian errors, and many others. Oh labour to remember theſe, keep them by you as a choiſe treaſure, lay them up in your heads and hearts, that you may be able to bring out of your treaſury things both new and old. O! let not any of the Truths of God ſlip out of your minds,

or be as water ſpilt upon the ground. Miniſters muſt dye, but let not the Truths of God dye in your hearts. Miniſters may be forcibly parted from you, and have their mouths ſtopt, as ours and many others are, and are like to be; yet let not the Word of Truth depart out of your minds, when we are gone. Let the Word of God, even that Word of his we have ſpoken to you in his Name, abide with you for ever: Let it live with you, and let it dye with you alſo. Oh let Truths be written on your hearts, as with the point of a Diamond, never to be razed out. A ſtony heart is a grievous plague; but an iron memory is a great mercy. Oh therefore remember what you have heard in point of Doctrine, and remember alſo the counſels and directions you have had given to you, as to the performance of publick, family, ſecret, relative Duties. Remember the warnings you have had againſt ſin. Sinners, you have been warned againſt your ſins. Thou *Drunkard*, *Swearer*, *Sabbath-breaker*, *Unclean perſon*, thou *enemy to Godlineſs*, thou *ſcoffer at*, and *perſecuter of Religion*; yea, you *Formaliſts*, *Hypocrites*, that reſt in civility, morality, or outſide-performances; you have been warned of the danger of your condition, of the wrath of God hanging over your heads for theſe ſins; of the neceſſity of repentance for, and from your ſins, and of faith in Chriſt, if ever you be ſaved. Remember the fore-warnings you have had of God's Judgments, of the things you now fear, yea feel. Have you not been told many a time, Chriſtians, what wantonneſſes in opinion and practice, the deadneſſes, worldlineſſes, decaies, carnal policy, diviſions of Profeſſors would bring upon them? And you that are Saints, remember what ſoul-refreſhing comforts you have had in and from the Word of God. Remember how plainly, purely, powerfully, plentifully the Word

of God hath been preached, and Ordinances dispensed among you. And remember also with what seriousness of spirit, high estimation, holy affection, readiness of mind, strong resolution, powerful impressions you have heard and received the Word and Ordinances of God, and what Gracious effects you have found of them.

Now to press this *Exhortation*, as a lesson I would leave with you. I shall first lay down some Motives: 2ly, Some Directions; 3ly, Helps to inable to performance of this duty. The Motives shall be what I might have laid down as Reasons of the Doctrine.

Mot. 1. The first Motive to stir you up to this Duty of remembering how you have received and heard, is this, *That the Truths you have heard, and Ordinances you have partaken of, they were not of use only for the time past or present, while you were or are hearing or receiving of them; but they are of use a great while after.* The Sermons you have long since heard, and Sacraments you have received, may do your souls good the longest day you live. The vertue and use of the Word and Ordinances may and doth often put forth it self long after the participation of them; and therefore you should remember them that you may bring them forth for use in the time to come, which you cannot do, if you let them slip out of your heads and hearts. The Truths of God are as Treasuries and storehouses, which are not onely for present use, but for time to come, for men to live on a great while after, in times of want and scarcity. And know this, Christians, you may have occasion to make use of every Truth you have heard, before you dye at one time or other, even those which while you hear them may seem less useful. To a man in prosperity the Doctrine of Sufferings and Afflictons may not seem so seasonable; or to one in adversity, to press the duties of one in a prosperous

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ſtate; but yet theſe may come to be of great advantage to you. The Sermons you have heard many years ſince, and which you hear this day, may prove food to your ſouls many years hence. Iſa. 42, 23. *Who is among you that hears for the time to come?* Oh Chriſtians, do you labour to be ſuch hearers.

Mot. 2. *Remember how you have received; remember old Truths, former Sermons, Sabbaths, Sacraments*: for the time may come, and you know not how ſoon, when you may have little elſe to live upon, but the old ſtore, even what you have formerly received and heard. You may be cut ſhort in your ſpiritual opportunities, you may have few, at leaſt comparatively, of thoſe helps you have injoyed, or ~~may~~ have Ordinances in ſuch a way, as may not yeeld ſatisfaction to your conſciences; and then the remembrance of what you have received, and what communion with God you have enjoyed, will be very precious. *Time may come* (bear with the expreſſion) *when you may have little but cold diſhes to feed upon.* In a time of ſcarcity, when there is little corn to be reaped, it is ſome comfort to have it in the barn or ſtore-houſe. The corn *Joſeph* laid up in years of plenty, helped to preſerve himſelf and whole family, yea all the land of *Egypt*. And, if you be careful to remember how you have received and heard, you may be able to feed your ſelves and others in a time of ſcarcity of ſpiritual opportunities, if for your and others ſins God ſhould bring it on you. Let me therefore leave the counſel in the Text with you; Go to the old ſtore. Feed on cold meat, when you may want warm: Warm it again on your hearts, by meditation and a practical remembrance of the Word. Thoſe things, which when you had full meals and full ſtomachs you lightly eſteemed, when your ſouls are hungry, and ſoul-proviſion is ſcarce, your commons ſhort,

then you may find and taſt much ſweetneſs in them.

Mot. 3. A third Motive to excite you to remember how you have received and heard, is this; *Conſider that God remembers how you have received and heard, and he will make you remember it alſo, and call you to an account for the things you have received and heard.* He remembers all the Truths that have been delivered to you, the Warnings you have had, the Sermons you have heard, the Sacraments you have received, and all other means of Grace you have injoyed; though you forget them, he remembers how plainly, purely, powerfully, and with what affection you have received them. And conſider further, God will call you to account for all theſe things, what good you have got by them; what improvement you have made of them, whether you have been brought to Repentance and Faith by them, and what progreſs in Faith and Holineſs you; who profeſs your ſelves to be Saints, have made under them. Oh therefore ſeeing God remembers theſe, do you alſo remember them.

4. A fourth Motive to excite you to this Duty of remembring how you have received and heard, is: *Conſider the great benefit, and uſefulneſs of this remembrance: it will be of very great uſe and advantage to your ſouls.* This I ſhall ſomewhat largely inſiſt on. And the particulars I ſhall hint under this head, may ſerve not onely as Motives to excite you to the practice of this duty, but alſo as Directions, to direct you what uſe you ſhould make of the Truths and Ordinances you have formerly received.

The firſt Benefit of remembring how you have received and heard, is; *That it will by the bleſſing of God upon it, prove a choice Antidote againſt Errors in Doctrine, and alſo againſt corruptions in the Worſhip of God*; if ever any of theſe come to be vented among you, or obtruded

truded and impoſed upon you. If Doctrines come to be preached that tend to the beating down the power of Godlineſs, or practice of holineſs, or that prejudice the free Grace of God in *Election*, or *Juſtification*, crying up conditional Decrees upon foreſight of Faith or Works, or perſeverance, or advancing Works in the buſineſs of Juſtification : or ſuch Doctrines as advance the power of Nature, the freedom of mans will, aſſert, that true Believers may finally and totally fall from Grace ; the remembrance of what you have received and heard, with the experience of the Work of God in your own hearts (you who are Saints) will antidote you againſt, and help you to confute theſe and ſuch like falſe doctrines ; And teach you to ſay, *We have not ſo learned Chriſt*. The reaſon why men ſlide into new errors, or old ones new vampt, is becauſe they let ſlip old truths ; if you forget truths you have heard, you loſe your touchſtone to try Doctrines by, and then you may be eaſily cheated with counterfeit mettal inſtead of Gold. You will be like a *Ship* that hath loſt its Anchor or Compaſs, you will goe you know not whither, and be in danger of ſplitting upon the Rocks. And this will alſo antidote you againſt humane inventions, mingled with and obtruded on men in the Worſhip of God. You will be able to ſay, *We have not ſo learned to Worſhip God* ; and teach you to reaſon, *Did Chriſt or his Apoſtles appoint Ordinances to be thus or thus diſpenſed?* Labour therfore to remember and make this uſe of your remembrance how you have received and heard.

2. A ſecond uſe or benefit of remembring how you have received and heard, is this ; *It will be by God's bleſſing a notable means to ſhame and humble you for all your uneven, unworthy, and unſuitable walking unto thoſe ſavory Truths, and precious Ordinances you have been partakers*

takers of. It will make you ashamed of your deadness, dulness, formality in Duties, and declinings and decaies in Grace. And you should endeavour thus to improve your remembrance of former receits of mercy. It will make you say to your souls, Hath my conversation been sutable to Divine Truths? Have I followed the directions and taken the warnings God hath given me? Oh what a vile sinful wretch have I been! And am I to walk so unanswerably to the Grace of God in the Gospel? It will make you blush when you remember how plainly, purely, powerfully, plentifully Ordinances have been dispensed to you: To think, Oh that I have had so impure a heart and life under such pure Ordinances! that there hath been no more of the power of Godliness expressed in my conversation, when I have lived under such powerful Administrations! that I have brought forth so little fruit, that I have been and am no more fat and flourishing in the Courts of God under that plenty of Heavenly *Manna* that hath been rained down upon me, and those soul-fatting Ordinances I have partaken of! Thus improve your remembrance how you have received and heard. When you find your hearts to grow dead and cold, O then say, Was it wont to be thus? Where are those high estimations, those lively affections, those holy resolutions, that seriousness of spirit, those powerfull Impressions and gracious Effects of the Word and Sacraments that I have found in and under them? Oh let this consideration excite you to this Duty in the Text, and make this use of former Gospel-enjoyments and the good you found in them, to shame and humble you that you have made no better improvement of them.

3. A third Benefit of remembring how you have received and heard, is, *That, through the blessing of God upon*

upon it, it will be a means and help to keep from ſin in practice; It will be a ſpecial Preſervative againſt the Infection of the ſins of the dayes and times into which you may be caſt. As you deſire to be preſerved from ſin, make conſcience of this duty; and it will be a means to recover you again when you have fallen into ſin. *Pſal.* 119. 9, 11. *Hiding the Word of God in his heart was a means to keep* David *from ſinning againſt God. Attending to the Word of God, is preſcribed by him as a means to cleanſe the wayes even of a young-man.* This will keep you from being ſuperſtitious, profane and looſe, when others are ſo; but if once you forget what and how you have received, you will ſoon ſwim down the ſtream with others, and quickly be over-run with ſin. *Peter* firſt forgot the word of warning Chriſt had given him, and then he ſoon forgot himſelf and his own duty, and fell into that foul ſin of *denying his Lord and Maſter.* Oh therefore *remember how you have received and heard*, and improve your Remembrance of it, to preſerve you from falling into ſin, and to recover you when you are fallen. When you are tempted to ſin, ſay, I have been otherwiſe taught, I have not ſo learned Chriſt, I have been warned againſt theſe and theſe ſins. As *Peter*'s forgetfulneſs of Chriſt's words was the cauſe of his fall, ſo it was the remembrance of what Chriſt had ſpoken that helped to raiſe him up again, when he was fallen. And you ſhould endeavour to improve the remembrance of the Words of Chriſt unto this end.

4. A fourth Benefit of this Remembrance how you have received and heard, is, *That it will be a ſpur to quicken unto Duty, and a means to excite and ſtrengthen Grace.* 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13, 14, 15. 2 *Pet.* 3. 1, 2. In all theſe places you will find that this *Remembrance of what men have received and heard, is a*

means

means to ſtir up the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in them. When you remember what you have received from God in Ordinances, and in the performance of holy Duties; it will make you deſirous to converſe in them, and to love them the better, the longeſt day you live. You will ſay, *It is good to be here*; you will never be weary of waiting upon God, whilſt you retain a ſavoury remembrance of the ſweetneſs, power and efficacy you have found and felt in the Word and Ordinances of God. And this will be alſo a means to increaſe and ſtrengthen Grace in the Soul. Grace in the Soul is nouriſhed by the ſame means by which it is begotten. Thoſe Promiſes that inclined the heart to believe at firſt, will now, being remembred and fed upon by Faith, raiſe Faith to higher pitches and degrees. Remembring your former experiences of God's helping you, when you have been in ſtraits, will help you to truſt in God in future ſtraits and tryals. Labour therefore to remember, and to make this uſe of the remembrance of what and how you have received and heard, to quicken you to a more conſtant attendance on God in Ordinances, and to increaſe and ſtrengthen Grace in your ſouls.

5. *The Remembrance how you have received and heard, will be of great uſe and advantage to your ſouls*; for it will keep up in your judgments an high eſtimation of, and in your affections a ſincere love to thoſe precious Truths, and thoſe plain, pure, powerful diſpenſations of Ordinances you have partaken of, even then when by ſickneſs, or any other hand of God upon you, you may be deprived of the actual enjoyment of them. If God ſhould remove Miniſters and Ordinances from you, or you from them, that you cannot enjoy them as you have done, yet the very remembrance of them will be precious, when you remember what heart-

warm-

warmings you have had under them. Labour to make this uſe of the remembrance of old Truths and former Enjoyments, to make you eſteem and love them.

6. A ſixth Benefit of remembring how you have received and heard, is, *That it will keep up in you earneſt and hungring deſires after, and ſtir up in you a mighty Spirit of Prayer, for the keeping and reſtoring, when you have loſt them, thoſe precious Truths and Ordinances wherein you have found ſo much of God.* It will cauſe you to ſay with the Diſciples, *Lord, evermore give us this Bread.* It will and ſhould cauſe you to cry to your Father for the Bread of Life; to ſay as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.*42. 1, 2. *Pſal.*63. 1, 2. *David* remembred what he had ſeen of the power and glory of God in the Sanctuary; and this ſets his ſoul a longing for the reſtoring again of thoſe bleſſed opportunities he had been priviledged with. O make this uſe of this Remembrance, *how you have received and heard,* to cauſe you to wreſtle with God in Prayer for the continuance and reſtitution of thoſe comfortable Sabbaths and Sacraments, that pure and powerful Preaching, Praying, and Adminiſtration of Ordinances God hath vouchſafed. It was this remembring of what, and how he had received, that made that holy Martyr, Biſhop *Latimer*, cry out, *Lord, reſtore the Goſpel once again to England.* And in ſuch, or the like caſes, it ſhould make you, and will make you pray, that God would reſtore the Liberty of his Miniſters, and the Power and Purity of his Ordinances, and try you, whether you would not through his Grace improve them better than you have done.

7. A ſeventh Benefit of this remembring how you have received and heard, is, *that it will bring into your ſouls the comfort and ſweetneſs of former Truths and Ordinances.* It will be as the rouling of a ſweet morſel under

der your tongues. You may hereby reap the benefit of former Sermons and Sacraments many years hence. Many times Truth is more sweet, and makes a more powerful impression on the soul in the meditation and repetition of it, than it did at its first delivery. And so it may do in you, if you be careful in the practice of this duty.

8. And lastly, *The remembring of what and how you have received and heard, may and will bear up you hearts under, and fortifie them against all Sufferings and Persecutions you may meet with in the wayes, and for the sake of Christ*; when you shall remember the warnings Christ hath given you, *John* 16. 1, 2. and the grounds of comfort you have found in the Word of God. Improve your remembrance of Truths for this end. So much for the *Motives* to stir up to the practice of this duty in the Text. And these eight last particulars may serve also to direct you what use you should make of the remembrance of what and how you have received.

I shall proceed to add some few *Directions*, to direct you how and after what manner you should remember what and how you have received.

1. Direction. *Remember what and how you have received and heard, Thankfully.* Oh be thankful (Christians) that you have enjoyed the Word and Ordinances of God so long, and that with so much plainness, power, purity, and plenty. Though you should never enjoy them more, yet you have cause to bless God, that have enjoyed the Word, Sacraments, Ministers so long above, not onely your desires, but also your expectations. Especially be you thankful that have received Christ and Grace through these; that you have received Grace before you have lost any of the means of Grace, that Christ and your souls have met, before you and Ministers have parted.

2. Direct-

2. Direction. *Remember how you have received and heard, Penitentially and ſorrowfully.*

1. *Penitentially* and *ſorrowfully*; That you prized and improved Truths and Ordinances no better, got no more good by them, grew no more in grace under them, gained no more power againſt corruptions, or ability to do and ſuffer, by them, while you did enjoy them.

2. Remember how you have received *ſorrowfully*, if you have loſt or ſhould loſe any of your opportunities. When the Wayes of *Sion* mourn, ſure the Sons of *Sion* ſhould mourn. You ſhould be ſorrowful for the Solemn Aſſemblies, the reproach of them ſhould be a burden unto Chriſtians. You ſhould remember your Goſpel-enjoyments with tears, as thoſe, *Pſal.* 137. 1, 2. even weep when you remember *Sion*. As the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 42. 3. Chriſtians in ſuch a caſe ſhould bewail the loſs of Ordinances and of ſo many of God's Miniſters.

3. Chriſtians ſhould eſpecially remember Goſpel mercies *Penitentially* in the want of them, when, and that they ~~by their ſins~~, have helped to ſin them away, by their unfruitful and unworthy walking. Know (Chriſtians) they are the ſinnes of Miniſters and People that ſtop the mouths of Miniſters, and deprive a People at any time of any of the tokens of God's preſence. You ſhould in ſuch a caſe and condition with ſorrow of heart ſay, we once enjoyed comfortable dayes of the Son of man: but by our deadneſs, ſpiritual wantoneſs and unfruitfulneſs we have now ſinned them away.

3. Direction. *Remember what and how you have received, Affectionately and Practically*. It is not a meer notional, but an affectionate and practical remembrance of Truths received, and Ordinances enjoyed,

that

that I now preſs to. Remember them with burning and inflamed hearts. So remember Truths as to practiſe them; to love Truth and to live in Truth, and Ordinances, ſo as to live up to them, ſo as to have pure hearts anſwerable to pure Ordinances, the power of Religon in your converſation ſutable to powerful adminiſtrations. Remember the Word of Truth to direct your practice, even as a Compaſs to ſail by in a troubleſom Sea & a dark night: and as a copy to write after. So remember what you have heard, as to ſet on the practice of duties you have been exhorted to, and directed in; and to avoid the ſins you have been warned againſt. So remember as to improve your remembrance of Truths to thoſe eight Uſes, before ſpecified, namely, *as an Antidote againſt error in Doctrine & corruption in Worſhip*, to humble for, & keep from ſin, quicken to duty, make you prize, love, pray for, long after the Word, for your comfort and ſupport under Sufferings.

Having given you ſome Directions how you ſhould remember what and how you have received and heard, I ſhall now cloſe this Doctrine, by adding ſome Means and Helps to enable you to the performance of that duty I have been exhorting you to.

1. A firſt Means or Help to enable to remember what you have received and heard, is, *Labour after a ſincere love to the Word, Ordinances and Miniſters of Chriſt.* Love Truth, and you will the more eaſily remember it. You will not ſuddenly or eaſily forget that you dearly love. Affection is a very great help to Memory. Receive Truth in your love and affection, and then you will keep it in your minds and memories. A man will remember what his mind and heart is ſet upon. A ſpecial means to keep Truths in your heads, is, to labour that they may be engraven in your hearts. Look upon the Word and Ordinances of God as your

Treaſury

Treaſure, and you will be ſure then, at leaſt practically to remember it. Men ſcarcely forget where they have laid their Treaſure or their Jewels, though they may, where they have laid things of leſſer moment. Love doth and will renew and revive the object loved in the mind and in the thoughts. Affection to Divine Objects is the ſafeſt Lock and Key to ſecure Spiritual Treaſures. *Pſal.* 119. 97. *David* loved the Law, and then he could do no other but make it his meditation all the day long.

2. A ſecond help or means to enable you to remember what and how you have received and heard, is, *Application*; to apply and appropriate Truths and Ordinances to your own ſouls. Labour to inſure your intereſt in Chriſt, the Covenant of Grace, and the great Truths of the Goſpel; and that will much further your remembring of them. You will be careful to remember what you look on as your concernments. Though men may forget others buſineſs, they will hardly forget their own, eſpecially if they be matters of great concernment, a matter wherein their whole eſtate is concerned, or a matter of life and death. And ſuch are the things you have received, and heard in the Goſpel. When you hear the Word, ſay, there God ſpoke to my ſoul. Men forget truths becauſe they are apt to put them off to others, and not to look on themſelves as as concerned in them: Oh therefore look on thy ſoul as concerned in what thou haſt heard and received, and this will help thee to remember it.

3. A third means to help you to remember what you have received and heard, is, *Serious and frequent meditation, and contemplation on what you have heard.* This is a great help to memory. Divine meditation fixes Truths in the head, and faſtens them in the heart, *Luke* 2. 19. ſhe kept theſe things, becauſe ſhe pondered

 them.

them. Be therefore much in meditation.

4. A fourth means to further your remembrance of what you have received and heard, is, *Holy conference.* This *Moſes* directs to, as a means to keep the things of God in the heart, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. This is as the driving home of the nail. That which one forgets, another may remember. Improve private conference, and ſpeak often one to another; and when you meet together, be more ſpiritual, ſavory and profitable in your diſcourſe than heretofore you have been; and then eſpecially, when you may have fewer publick opportunities. Time may come, when this may be one of the beſt helps you may have. It may be God may cut you ſhort of many publick advantages, to chaſten you for your not uſing or improving private communion of Saints, and to quicken you to uſe and improve holy conference and other private duties, more and better.

5. A fifth means to help you to remember what and how you have received and heard, is, *Earneſt and fervent prayer to God, that He would ſtrengthen your memories, and give his Spirit to you according to his promiſe, to bring all things to your remembrance.* Commit Truths to the Spirit's keeping, and truſt not onely to your own memories. Often plead that promiſe with God, *John* 14. 26. Chriſt would not truſt his Diſciples alone with his Sermons. He knew their memories were ſlippery. But He intruſts his Spirit to bring things to their remembrance: and the Spirit can and will bring Truths to your remembrances, in the moſt ſeaſonable time.

And laſtly, *Endeavour to practiſe the things you have received and heard, and that will be a means to help you to remember them.* Labour to get good by the Word and Ordinances, and you will not ſoon forget them. He who

who daily writes after a Copy, wil be better able to remember it long after. *Pſal.* 119. 93. *I will never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou haſt quickned me.* Thoſe Sermons, Sacraments and other Ordinances, in and by which God hath quickned and comforted you, you will not forget.

So much for handling this Doctrine. Might I have had liberty to preach to you as long as I hoped, and the Law allowed, I ſhould have handled the two other Directions in the Text, *Hold faſt and Repent.* But ſeeing I am like to preach to you no more, I ſhall briefly touch upon them, and leave them with you in a way of Exhortation.

A fourth Direction Chriſt gives to this Church in order to recovering of her from her deadneſs and formality, is, *To hold faſt what ſhe had received.* The Doctrine, is, *That it is the duty of Chriſtians, and a means to recover declining Churches and Chriſtians, to hold faſt what they have received and heard.* And indeed without this you cannot be ſtrengthned by it. That which you have loſt and let ſlip, will do you but little good. You muſt not onely remember, but alſo hold faſt. I ſhall not handle this Doctrinally: Time will not permit it. And beſides, I have formerly inſiſted on this Doctrine and duty from the 13*th* and 25*th* verſes of the ſecond Chapter. I ſhall therefore onely leave the *Exohortation* with you; *Hold faſt what you have received and heard.*

And here I ſhall briefly ſhew you, firſt, What you ſhould hold faſt. 2*ly*, Againſt what. 3*ly*, How you may do it.

Firſt, What you ſhould hold faſt. (1.) Hold faſt the Doctrine of the Goſpel you have received and heard. Do not let go any Truth of God. *Buy the Truth, but ſell it not at any rate,* Prov. 23. 23. You

may meet with thoſe that would pluck it from you: but be ſure you hold it faſt, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14. (2.) Hold faſt the plain, pure, and powerful Ordinances of God. Oh do not let theſe go; at leaſt not through your default. Let them not go for want of prayers and tears to keep them. But may ſome ſay, *How if they ſhould be gone? How if God for our ſins ſhould take them away?* Why however, yet (3.) Be ſure you hold faſt a high eſtimation of the Word and pure Ordinances of God. If ever you ſhould want them, yet prize and eſteem them as your treaſure; let the want of Spiritual Mercies, teach you more to value the worth of them. Though you ſhould loſe many of your mercies and opportunities, yet be ſure you do not loſe your eſteem of them. (4.) Be ſure you hold faſt your love to the Truths and Ordinances of God, as wel in the want, as in the enjoyment of them. Love the Word, and love the Miniſters of Chriſt, even then when you may be deprived of them. (5.) Hold faſt your appetite and ſtomach to the Word & Ordinances of God: though you ſhould loſe ſome of your meat, take heed you loſe not your ſtomach with your meat. If you have leſſe food, yet you ſhould labour to have the better ſtomachs. Oh beg of God, that though he ſhould ſuffer your food to fail, yet that he would not take away your appetites, but keep them freſh and lively. In temporals it would be a mercy if men wanted meat, to want a ſtomach: but in Spirituals it will be a mercy, though you ſhould have little food, yet to have a good ſtomach continued. This will be a pledge of Gods returning and reſtoring wanted and deſired mercies. For God hath ſaid, *He will ſatisfie the hungry ſoul with bread.* (6.) Laſtly be ſure you hold faſt the good you have got by the Word, Prayer, Sacraments, the Miniſters and Ordinances of Chriſt.

Though

Though you ſhould part with theſe things themſelves, yet be ſure you retain and hold faſt the good you have got by them, and thoſe impreſſions of God's Spirit that have bin made on your hearts, through & under them.

And all this you muſt hold faſt (which leads) to the 2d Particular, againſt (1.) The fraud and deceit of Seducers, and Deceivers, who would go about to cheat and cozen you of the great and precious Truths of the Goſpel, and of the true inſtituted Worſhip of God. The Apoſtle tells you, that ſuch will ariſe that will *privily bring in damnable hereſies*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1,2,3. and the Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of the ſleights and cunning craftineſs of men, their methods to deceive. They will perhaps plead Antiquity, Tradition, the Authority of the Church, the Suffrage of Ancient Fathers, Cuſtom, Example, yea ſeeming Reaſon for many Opinions and Practices. But Chriſtians, be not cheated of your Religion; but that which you have received of the Lord Chriſt, and hath been delivered to you by the Apoſtles in the Word, thoſe Truths and inſtructions of Chriſt, do you hold faſt.

Secondly, Hold faſt the Truths and Ordinances of Chriſt, as againſt the fraud of Deceivers, ſo againſt the force and violence of Perſecutors. As you ſhould not be fawned, ſo neither ſhould you be frighted out of any one Truth or Ordinance of God, or out of your love to, deſires after, or owning of them.

Thirdly, And the means to enable you to hold faſt what you have received, are,

1. Diligent attendance on the publick Ordinances and Worſhip of God, if, and when you can enjoy them in any meaſure according to Gods will, though not altogether in that manner you deſire, and they ſhould be adminiſtred in. I hope that for thoſe many praying, believing, hungry ſouls ſake,

that are to be found in this place, God may provide you in his due time with ſome ſuch Teachers as may give you ſome wholſome food, and not feed you with ſtones inſtead of bread. For ſome ſuch I doubt not will be found, if God ſhall vouchſafe to you the mercy of a faithful Miniſter. Though I dare not adviſe you actively to join in any thing that is in it ſelf, or in your judgement evil, till you be ſatisfied about it; yet I muſt adviſe you to take heed of ſeparation from the Church, or from what is good, and God's own Ordinance. If ſound Truth be powerfully preached, make uſe of, and improve that, though you cannot approve every thing the Miniſter doth. I the rather add this, becauſe there are many that if Miniſters do but mention the loſs of Miniſters, are ready preſently to accuſe them of monopolizing all Religion to themſelves, and to their party. But far be this from me and others. I well know while the beſt of men are on earth, there is likely to be variety of apprehenſions; and ſome men of ſound judgements in the main, & of holy lives, may ſatisfie themſelves in the lawfulneſs of ſome things, which others judge ſinful. And if God ſend ſuch to you, though I do not bid you approve their practice, or juſtifie what they do, yet bleſs God for them, and improve their gifts and graces. And yet at the ſame time you have juſt cauſe to bewail the laying aſide of ſo many hundreds of Miniſters. Had ſo many hundreds of Miniſters dyed a natural death in one day, you would have looked upon it as a great judgement: And ſure it is no leſs when ſo many ſhall dye a civil death.

2. A ſecond means to enable you to hold faſt what you have received, is, To be much in conference

ference; in considering one the other, to provoke to love and to good works. As this is a help to remembring; so also to holding fast what you have received, *Heb.* 10. 23, 24, 25.

3. Hold fast the Word and Ordinances, by prayer that God would continue them, and that he would keep them in your minds and hearts.

4. Be sure you hold fast God and Christ by faith. It is God that vouchsafeth all these to you: If the streams should fail, be sure you hold fast the Fountain, and you will be, and do well enough.

5. The fifth and last Counsel and Direction Christ gives to this languishing Church, is, *To Repent.* Whence observe;

Doct. *That Repentance is a soveraign means to repair decayed Religion and Godliness in a Church, and in the souls of men. Repentance is the souls Physick, that purgeth out ill humors, heals the souls distempers, and restores it to a healthful constitution.*

I intend not to handle this, but to turn it into an Exhortation: Let me leave this Counsel and Exhortation with all of you this day, as that which probably may be the last, and I am sure is the best Counsel I can give. Oh *Repent, Repent*; both sinners and Saints. Repent thou Drunkard, Swearer, Sabbath-breaker, Unclean person, thou Opposer of Godliness, or what ever else thy sin be; Remember thou hast been called on to repent this day! O *repent while it is called to day, before the things that belong to your peace be hid from your eyes.* Repent even all, both bad and good, of those sins that have brought these Judgments upon us, which this day we lie under. More particularly,

1. *Repent of that Opposition against the Gospel, and against the Ministers and Ordinances of Christ that any of*

you have been, or are guilty of: For this ſin provokes God to take away Goſpel-Mercies from a People. 'Tis true indeed, that we may ſay and bleſs God for it, that for the time we have laboured among you, we have met with as little of this, as any have done in a place of this bigneſs. Yet ſome there have been, that have been guilty of this, though not many: and they may have time enough to repent the haſtning of their own calamities. Repent of this ſin. Conſider what God ſaith of ſuch, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16.

2. *Repent of your Unthankfulneſs for the Goſpel.* Repent of your not enough prizing Ordinances, of your too much loathing, or at leaſt (even by the beſt) too little loving Spiritual *Manna.*

3. *Repent of your Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs under, and too little improvement of the Word, Sacraments and Sabbaths you have enjoyed.* Bewail your ſin, that you have got no more good by all theſe, that you have laid up no more in your years of plenty, againſt years of ſcarcity.

4. *Repent of that too much Wantonneſs in Opinion and Practice that hath been to be found among Profeſſors under choiceſt Goſpel-enjoyments*; that you have played by the light, and with the bread that God hath vouchſafed to you, and not wrought by the one, or fed heartily upon the other: which may juſtly provoke God to put out your light, and take away your bread.

5. *Repent of your decayes in Religion and Grace,* for which God threatens to remove the Candleſtick from a Church and people, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5.

6. Laſtly, *Repent of that Deadneſs and Formality in Religion, and in the Worſhip of God,* which you ſee to be in others, but moſt of all, of that you find and feel to be in your own hearts. For, for theſe and ſuch like Sins it is, that God comes as a thief on Churches or Perſons.

Perſons. And to ſtir you up to repent, Conſider,

Firſt, If you do not Repent, God will come as a thief on you, even ſuddenly, unexpectedly, when you leaſt think of it; and that, to take away your Treaſure, your moſt Precious things, which are ſo in themſelves, and ſhould be ſo in your eſteem, even his Word, Sacraments, Sabbaths, Miniſters, and all the tokens of his Gracious preſence. This will God do, if you do not repent, but remain hard-hearted and formal, ſtill contenting your ſelves with a name to live.

2. Conſider, If you do repent of the evil you have done againſt God, God may, yea you have ground to hope he wil, repent of the evil he is doing unto you: He can find out ways agreeable to his Word and Will to continue or reſtore Miniſters to People, and People to Miniſters. He may yet return and leave a bleſſing behind Him. O therefore Repent; let us all ſet upon this work of Repentance.

And now Beloved, I have finiſhed what I at this time intended to ſpeak upon this Text, and probably with that my Teſtimony in publick among you. Let me beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider and ſet upon the practiſe of the Duties I have in the Name of the Lord from this Scripture exhorted you to. Beloved, It is no ſmall grief and trouble to my ſelf and Fellow-labourer, to part with you. It was in our hearts to have lived and died with you, and among you, if God had ſeen it fit; But the will of the Lord be done. We muſt acknowledge to the glory of God, and your juſt commendation, that great hath been the incouragement we have found among you, from God, from you, and from our Honourable Patron. From God in his remarkable Providence in bringing us firſt among you,

you, in vouchſafing his Gracious Preſence to and with us ſince, and in giving in ſome conſiderable fruit of our weak unworthy labours; for we may ſay, that a great door and effectual hath been opened, though of late there have been many adverſaries. And great hath been the encouragement we have received from you alſo; from your great affection to us, and eſpecially from your ready entertainment of our Labours, and forward and chearful ſubmiſſion to the Ordinances of Chriſt that have been diſpenſed among you; which, though it cannot but add much to our grief in parting from you, yet it is no ſmall addition to our comfort alſo. We have alſo received much encouragement, and many undeſerved reſpects from the honourable Patron of this Place: for all which we heartily bleſs God, and no leſs heartily pray, that God would recompence his and your reſpects to us a thouſand fold into his and your boſomes. And I truſt we can in ſincerity ſay for our ſelves, that we have not ſought yours, but You; and that it is not the loſs of our places, and outward accommodations that trouble us, but the loſs of our opportunities of ſerveing our God, & your precious and immortal ſouls in the work of the Goſpel. It grievs us to think of the ſnares and temptations you may meet; with for when the Shepherds are ſmitten, the Sheep are like to be ſcattered. If God ſhall ſend ſuch among you as wil (in the main) be faithful to God and your ſouls, it will afford much hearts-eaſe to us, and ſatisfaction to our ſpirits. We have for above eleven years preached to you by our publick labours; God now calls us and many others to preach to you by our ſilence. And the very ſilence of ſo many Miniſters, if bleſſed by the Lord, may prove the moſt powerful and effectual Sermon to People that they have had. This ſpeaks Gods diſpleaſure; this bids both

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us, and you, look into our and your hearts and wayes, what it is that hath provoked God to ſend upon us this ſad diſpenſation.

The ſilence of Miniſters calls aloud on us all to humble our ſelves under the mighty hand of God. It bids us repent of our ſins, the cauſes of Gods Judgments. It calls on you to prize and improve Miniſters and Ordinances better, if God ſhall continue, reſtore, or further afford them to you. Yea, Miniſters ſilence ſhould cauſe People to ſpeak the more, and louder to God in prayer for the continuance and reſtoring of Miniſters and Ordinances to them. When you do not hear ſo much, and often from God in preaching, let God hear the more and oftner from you in prayer. Ply the Throne of Grace. *Give God no reſt, till he make Jeruſalem a Praiſe in the earth.* And as our ſilence ſhould make you ſpeak the more to God, ſo alſo the more and oftner one unto another in holy conference, to *provoke to love and to good works.* And I beſeech you Brethren, pray for us. What ever God may do with us, or whitherſoever we may be driven, we ſhall carry you in our hearts; and when and while we remember our ſelves to God, we ſhall never forget you, but preſent you and your ſouls concernments daily unto God at the Throne of Grace in our prayers. And we earneſtly beg this of you, as, that you would remember what we have ſpoken to you in the Name of the Lord; ſo that you would remember us to God, and let us have a room and ſhare in your hearts and prayers. When you get into a corner to pour out your hearts before God, carry us to God upon your hearts: Do not forget us, but lift up a prayer to God for us, your (we hope we may ſay) faithfull, though weak, unworthy Miniſters, who have laboured among you in the Word and Doctrine.

I ſhall

I ſhall ſay no more, but conclude with theſe two Scriptures; the one, Acts 20.32. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all thoſe that are ſanctified.* The other Scripture is, that requeſt of *Paul* to, and prayr for the Hebrews, *Heb.* 13. 18, 19, 20, 21. *Pray for us, for we truſt we have a good conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly. But I beſeech you the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner. Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt. To whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON

SERMON III. by John Barret. A.M. St. Peter's. Nottingham

Phil. 2. 12. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have alwayes obeyed, not as in my presence onely, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

BEloved, I am now (it seems) to bid you Farewell; and I rejoice I have this one opportunity more of preaching to you. Though it is sad to think of parting, (if my poor pains might have been any way profitable amongst you) yet I cannot wonder that here the course of my publick Ministry is stopt. When I first came to you, *I* expected to have dwelt in silence, and to have been free among the dead long ere this day. Now this is like to be the last Sermon *I* shall ever preach to you here, my hearts desire and earnest prayer to God is, That more good may be done by this one, than hath been done by many Sermons past. That if you that see me this day, should see me here no more, yet you might have cause to bless God for what you shall now hear, even while you have a day to live. The words of a dying friend are wont to make a deep impression; so should the words of a departing Minister. Beloved, *I* am confident that both you and *I* must give an account of this dayes Work to the Judge of all the World. Wherefore *I* would be so serious even in all *I* say unto you, as if *I* were immediately to give up my account to God: and *I* desire and beseech you, in the fear of God, and for the love you ow to your own souls, that you would as seriously attend to what shall be spoken.

This

This Exhortation of the Apoſtle even now read unto you, depends on, and is inferred from what goes before; as appears from the Illative [*Wherefore.*] The Apoſtle having ſpoken of the humiliation and obedidience of Chriſt (as he was *obedient unto death, v.* 8.) and of his glorious exaltation that followed thereupon, he preſſeth theſe believers to obedience and continuance therein, from Chriſt's example, and the bleſſed end thereof, *viz.* their own Salvation.

Note. *The Life of Chriſt is a Chriſtians Copy. An exact, an excellent Copy indeed for us all to write after.*

Learn of me, ſayes he. And what grace, what virtue is there, that ye may not learn of Chriſt? Never was there ſuch love to God and man, like that which wrought in the heart of Jeſus Chriſt. Never was there ſelf-denial or humility comparable unto Chriſts. Never any zeal, any holineſs like Chriſts. O beloved, no danger of our being too holy, too preciſe, ſince it's impoſſible, but that when we have done our beſt, we ſhall fall far ſhort of out Copy here. They that cenſure Chriſtians now, and charge them with over-much ſtrictneſs, and making too much ado in Religion; much more that theſe (had they lived in his dayes) would have found fault with Jeſus Chriſt. But I have no more to ſay to theſe here, who are enemies to the power and ſtrictneſs of Chriſtianity, onely a word to you my Friends: Don't ye think much to bear reproaches for Chriſt here, who hope at laſt to appear with him in *Glory*: We would be like him in his glorified eſtate, what reaſon then, we ſhould be conform'd to him in humiliation, and in an holy converſation. But let this ſerve as touching the coherence.

In the words themſelves you may obſerve,

I. A weighty Exhortation, [*Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling.*] Where you have

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1. The duty it self, *Work out your ſalvation.* And

2. The manner how it muſt be done, *with fear and trembling.*

II. The manner how the Apoſtle preſſeth this Exhortation,

1. By a ſweet compellation, [*My Beloved.*]

2. By a prudent commending of their former courſe, [*as ye have always obeyed.*]

III. Another Argument may be couched in theſe words, [*not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence.*] *i.e.* Though ye have not me preſent with you, yet God is preſent with you, and the eye of the Lord is on you ſtill. And this would further evidence your ſincerity, that what you have done in Religion, was not (*Phariſee*-like) to be ſeen of men, if you obey and work on, *not only in my preſence.* And indeed it is a work of neceſſity, and as much need you ſhould follow it cloſe now, as ever; yea [*much more in my abſence*] ſayes he. While I was with you, I was moſt willing and ready to do what in me lay to promote your Salvation; but now, if you have not ſo much help from me as when I was amongſt you, ye had need take the greater pains your ſelves. Children that were but too careleſs while their Father was with them, had need learn to take care when he is gone.

My Beloved, ἀγαπητοί μου, one Copy hath it, ἀδελφοί μου, *my Brethren.* But I ſhall not ſtay at the compellation, which you ſo frequently meet with.—*As ye have always obeyed*] ὑπηκούσατε μου, as ſome read it. Or with *Grotius*, we may underſtand τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, as 2 *Theſſ.* 1.8. or, τῷ λογῳ, as 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 14. obeyed the Goſpel, or obeyed the Word. *As ye have always obeyed,*] Obeyed what? *Loquitur de obedientia, non erga impiorum hominum traditiones, ſed erga Deum, eiuſque Evangelium,* ſayes *Zanchy.* He ſpeaks not of obedience to the

the traditions of sinful ungodly men, but of obedience to God, and his Gospel. *Ye have obeyed always*, *i. e.* from the time that you first received the Gospel. Not but that they had fallen into many *particular acts* of disobedience even since their conversion; but they now no more followed *a course* of disobedience as they had done before. Their desire, will and purpose, care and study was constantly to obey.

Note. *That good beginnings must be seconded and backt with good proceedings, and crowned with an answerable conclusion.* It's not enough to *begin*, but we must *end* in the Spirit. For this the Church of *Thyatira* is commended, that *her last works were more than her first*, Rev. 2. 19. O Christians, you that have set forth, that have entered into the ways of God, go on, I beseech you. You have had a Name to live, and more than a Name, I trust. Religion has flourished in this Town, the Lord grant it may flourish still. O may it take such deep root in your hearts, that all opposite power, (let men and devils do their worst) may never be able to pluck it up. It follows,

—*Not in my presence onely*] *i. e.* while I am among you, calling earnestly upon you to follow your work, [*but now much more in my absence*] now that you have fewer helps, and greater hinderances.

Note also by the way, *That Christians are not sure they shall always have Gods Ministers at hand.* When the means of Grace are brought to a place, none can say how long the same shall be continued. As when the children of *Israel* were encamped, and had pitched their Tents, they could not tell how soon the fiery pillar would remove, and call them forth again.

Now, how does this blame the folly and security of the most, who are careless of improving Gods Ministers while they are continued amongst them. Indeed,

deed, this minds your poor Miniſters (at leaſt that have been yours) of their falling ſhort. Oh, may we not remember our faults this day! Oh, our want of diligence, that we have done no more good while we have had opportunity; that it has not been our meat and drink to feed the ſouls of others, ſo much as it ought to have been. Brethren, we will not excuſe our ſelves, we dare not; the Lord is juſt in threatning at this day to lay ſo many of us aſide, who have laid out our ſelves no more for him, and the good of ſouls. But have you nothing to charge upon your ſelves, who have been our hearers? The Lord knows, whether in the courſe of our Miniſtry we have vented our own fancies, or have not declared the will and mind of God to you; and whether you have heard and received it as the word of God. I hope it has been our deſire not to with-hold any thing that was profitable; and has it been your care indeed to profit? Oh! I muſt tell you, it grieves us at heart to think that we ſhall leave ſo many of you in groſs ignorance, after means of knowledge; that we ſhould leave ſo many of you in prophane courſes, after many plain reproofs; that we ſhould leave ſo many of you ſtrangers unto Chriſt, who have heard ſo much of him, and have been ſo oft invited, perſwaded, and preſſed to come in to him. And howſoever many will think, there is no loſs of us; yet one day you will ſee what your ſouls have loſt, who have enjoyed Gods Ordinances (though diſpenſed by never ſo weak and contemptible inſtruments) and have not regarded to improve them.

Here I would have ſpoken a word to others of you, who have got ſomething, though not ſo much as you might have done. Let what hath been wanting in your former *proficiency*, be made up (as it were) in after-humiliation and *repentance*. And if you are conſcious to your ſelves, that your unprofitableneſs may have ſome

hand in ſtopping the mouths of your poor Miniſters, let the thoughts of it cauſe you now to open your mouths, and lift up your your cryes more earneſtly in prayer to God for them. It follows,

—*Now much more in my abſence.*] *q. d.* if ever you deſired to promote your ſalvation, now much more it concerns you to mind it; if you want other Monitors to ſtir you up to diligence here, you had need be more watchful over your own ſouls, you ſhould have the greater care of them your ſelves. As the *Syriac Verſion* hath it, *But now when I am abſent from you, much more with fear and trembling work the work of your ſalvation.*

Hence note, *That the want or loſs of Miniſters, of means formerly enjoyed, will not warrant or excuſe our cooling in Religion; but ſhould rather produce a greater care and ſolicitouſneſs in the working out of our ſalvation.* Diſadvantages here are no plea for *remiſneſs*, but rather ought to provoke unto greater *induſtry*. And for our encouragement, the Lord will not forſake ſuch as *diligently* ſeek him. Were we not ſtraitned in our ſelves, we ſhould find we are not ſtraitned in him. When we may want ordinary helps, yet he can convey his Grace, and manifeſt himſelf extraordinarily unto our ſouls. Remember, when outward means, and proviſions fail, God hath hidden Manna for his people. *If* he leads them into a Wilderneſs, he knows how to feed them there, *Rev.* 12. 6. *In* a ſolitary place he can ſpeak to their hearts. *I* may here allude to *Iſa.* 37. 30. *Ye ſhall eat this year ſuch as groweth of it ſelf, and the ſecond year that which ſpringeth of the ſame; and in the third year ſow ye, and reap, and plant Vinyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* Be not ye wanting to your own ſouls, and you ſhall find God is not. Do you in good earneſt intend the buſineſs of your ſalvation? follow your work cloſe, and truſt God to provide for you. The *Lord* will turn ſtones into

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to bread, before he will ſuffer your ſouls to ſtarve. Well (beloved) as many of you have ſhewed your ſelves a willing and a forward people (bleſſed be God) while Miniſters have been preſent with you, labouring among you, hold on ſtill when we may be removed from you. I hope we can ſay from our hearts, *We are glad when we are weak*, (when we are of leaſt account, under moſt contempt in the world) *if ye are ſtrong; and this alſo we wiſh, even your perfection.* Yea, Beloved, *now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord.* This, if any thing, will keep our hearts alive under our troubles. O look to your ſelves, that ye loſe not thoſe things which ye have wrought. If we muſt not be ſuffered to preach any more in publick amongſt you, yet it would be a joy to us to ſee and know, that in our former Labours we had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. But I proceed,

Work out your own ſalvation. The meaning is not, that they ſhould merit their own ſalvation (that were to take Chriſts work out of his hand) but ſtrive and endeavour with might and main to be partakers of that Salvation and Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt. And this every one ought to mind, and lay out themſelves about, as the chiefeſt buſineſs they have in the world to look after. Oh how ſhould we fear, leſt any of us ſhould in the end come ſhort of it!

Work.] Note, *That a Chriſtian-Profeſſion is not an idle Profeſſion, it ſets men a-work. If we are in Chriſts Vinyard, we muſt be* Labourers, *Matt.* 20. 1, *&c.*

Your own Salvation] or, the things that conduce to your Salvation. Follow the things that accompany Salvation, your own Salvation. Elſewhere in Scripture it is called the *Salvation of God.* The Lord is the Author of Salvation, that it is properly called, *His Salvation.* It is alſo called *our own ſalvation*, as we are partakers of it.

Work out your own ſalvation.] Note, *That Religion teacheth*

cheth us first and chiefly to look to the state of our own souls. This would learn us especially to eye our own hearts, to observe our own duties, and to secure the condition of our own souls. Many work not at all, but are busie-bodies: Very busie concerning this man and the other, but do nothing for themselves. Many could like to enquire of others, with *Peter*, *Lord, what shall this man do?* Rather than with the *Publicans* and Souldiers that came to *John's* Baptism, *Master, what shall we do?* Now how unlikely is it that they should do much to promote the salvation of others, who neglect, are unwilling to be at any pains about their own?

With fear and trembling.] *Metalepsis, pro eo quod est, cum summa diligentia*, With the greatest diligence, saith *Vatablus.* With humility and lowliness of mind, as *Camero*, who observes these words used together five times in Scripture, (*scil. Psal.* 2. 11. 1 *Cor.* 2. 3. 2 *Cor.* 7. 15. *Eph.* 6. 5. and in the Text) and always in this sence. As elsewhere the Apostle hath opposed the word φοβῆσθαι, to fear, unto the word ὑψηλοφρονεῖν, *Rom.* 11. 20. The *Papists* from this Text would exclude a particular perswasion of ones Salvation, and commend doubting and hesitation in this matter. That which the Scripture excites all the faithful to use their best diligence to obtain, as a means to facilitate their passage and entrance into Heaven, (2 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11.) this the *Papists* would disswade us all from looking after, and declaim against, as an impediment in the way to Heaven, a thing that would hinder our progress therein. But the *fear* and *trembling* in the Text, is not such as is opposite to *Faith*, or to a certainty of ones Salvation (a glorious Crown which is sometimes set upon the heads of Believers, even here below) But such *fear* as is opposite and contrary to *security* and *self-conceit.* Indeed these are two grand impediments to the work-

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ing out of our Salvation, which the Apoſtle is very careful here to remove. *Security* maketh us negligent and careleſs of doing what we ought. *Pride* makes us arrogate unto our ſelves what properly belongs to the Grace of God and Chriſt. As there are two main Deſignes Satan is continually driving on in the world; and where one fails, he proſecutes the other.

1. He doth what in him lies to keep men in ſecurity, as by Nature we are all in a ſtate of Security. *Rom.* 3. 11. *There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God.* And the Devil knows we are his own ſure enough, if he can but keep us at this paſs.

But 2*dly*, If we have our conſciences awakened, that we can have no reſt, but muſt do ſomething in Religion; then he hath this after-game to play, he will ſeek to puff us up with conceits of our own works and abilities. To countermine whoſe deſtructive, helliſh deſignes, the Apoſtle gives us this direction here, *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God* (as he further adds in the next verſe) *which worketh in you both to will and to do.* But mark it, this holy fear commended to us in the text, is ſo far from diſturbing, or excluding peace of conſcience, and a particular perſwaſion of our good eſtates, as that it moſt directly conduceth unto, and likewiſe ſecures and fenceth the ſame. As *Calvin* well obſerves, *Facit noſtri diffidentia, ut fortius reclinemus in Dei miſericordiã:* The more we diſtruſt our ſelves, our own ſtrength, the more we ſhall ſee a neceſſity of relying on the Grace of God, the way to eſtabliſhment. We cannot ſtand of our ſelves, on our own legs; yet is there no danger of our falling, while we are careful to lean on the Grace of God, and Chriſt.

There are many things I muſt omit and paſs by, to come to the main Doctrine, (which may be the laſt

Doctrine I ſhall ever have liberty to preach to you.)

Doct. *The great buſineſs we have in this world, which requires our conſtant and chiefeſt care, is, the working out of our own Salvation.*

Note, when I ſay, this is the great work we have here do, I do not mean as excluſive of, but as including our glorifying God. As God's glory and our happineſs are linked together in Adamantine chains, and cannot be ſeparated. In ſeeking the advancement of God's glory, we ſhould certainly provide for our ſouls everlaſting welfare: as on the other hand, if we have no care of our own ſouls, it's impoſſible we ſhould make it our work to advance God's glory.

Now in the proſecution of the Point, I ſhall firſt briefly open, and then apply it.

Explication. To ſhew what it is to work out our Salvation.

1. It is implyed here, that we muſt have an *Holy Calling*. We muſt be *partakers of the heavenly calling*. Elſe there is no poſſibility of working out our Salvation. As the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. 3. 1. *Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling*—— We muſt *give diligence to make our calling ſure*, as we are exhorted, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. O that I were able to ſay that of you all, which the Apoſtle ſays of the believing Corinthians, *Ye know your calling, brethren.* Indeed there is a bare *external calling*, & many that have this, I ſay there are many that have an external calling and profeſſion; but this is not enough, you may have it, and yet *break*, and be *undone*, for ever. Again, there is an *internal*, and *effectual calling*; when a man is not only willing to take up a profeſſion of Chriſtianity, but hath his heart and will drawn over to Chriſt: And this ſets the ſoul in a ſtate of Salvation. Rom. 8, 30. *Whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called.* And this

this is indeed a prerequisite here. We must first be *savingly wrought upon*, before we can *work out our Salvation*. O Sirs, I beseech you take heed of resting in a civil conversation, or a meer external profession: For in the Name of God I testifie unto every one of you this day, that there is no calling in the world on which your souls can live, but that inward effectual calling. It's not a *Ministers calling* that will save him; though that be something higher then being called a Professor. *Judas* his Apostleship (which was the highest degree of the Ministry) could not save him. So a man may be a Preacher of the Word, and yet in the end prove a *cast-away*. Then think it not enough that thou art a Professor. But as it is in 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *who hath saved us, and called us whith an holy calling*; as ever you would be saved, look after this *Holy Calling*.

2. Again, As we must have an holy Calling, so we must see that we *follow our Calling*. As it is not enough, that a man hath a calling, but if he would live by it, he must follow his calling. So Christians that would *work out their Salvation*, must daily *exercise* themselves unto *Godliness*, must follow after Righteousness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness. We must be daily at work with our hearts to get them into a more holy and heavenly frame: Be continually employing and *laying out that stock* of Grace the Lord hath put into our hands. We should follow on to know the Lord, after he hath made himself known to us: And labour to walk worthy of Him, who hath called us unto His Kingdom and Glory. Herein should we exercise our selves continually to have consciences void of offence both towards God and towards man. O Christians, follow your callings. You have two callings, your *particular Callings* (which I

meddle not with at this time: as there is no need to preſs many of you to follow them, you are at them early and late, ſome of you, ſo that you leave little time for God, you ſuffer your particular Callings greatly to entrench upon the other, which is) your *General Calling*, your Calling as Chriſtians, as Saints. O Sirs, now ſee that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; That it may appear you have not received the Grace of God in vain. Be holy in all manner of converſation. Deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, and righteouſly and godly in this preſent world. Labour daily to grow in Grace, go on in the work of Sanctification; and thus your vocation would be evidenced to be ſaving and effectual. O we beſeech you Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would *abound more and more*. For this is the will of God, even your Sanctification, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 1, 3.

(3.) One thing more I muſt add here, which the Text indeed doth more directly point at; We muſt *ever abide in this our calling*, muſt hold on in the courſe and practice of Chriſtianity to the end. To allude to that in 1 *Cor.* 7. 20. *Let every man abide in his Calling.* What ever we do, we muſt never lay down this our heavenly Calling. *Work out*, ſayes the Apoſtle, κατεργάζεσθε, not ſimply, *work*, but *work out*. Thus we muſt never give over our work, till we can ſay *it is finiſhed*, till we come to *the end of our work*, the end of our Faith, the *Salvation of our ſouls*. We ſhould fear being like to Iſrael there, *Hoſ.* 8. 3. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good.* Or like thoſe Apoſtates, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20, 21. who after they had *known the way of Righteouſneſs, turned again from the holy Commandment* delivered unto them: after they had eſcaped the pol-

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lutions of the world, were again entangled therein, and overcome, whoſe latter end was worſe than their beginning. It is not enough, only to have begun well: but we muſt [*preſs forward towards the Mark, for the price of* [*the High Calling*] *of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3. 14. *He that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill: and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.* We muſt ſee that we never be *aſhamed of* our profeſſion, nor *a ſhame to* our profeſſion. And the God of all Grace, who hath called us into his Eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle and confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I now come to make ſome improvement of the Point. And (becauſe I want time and ſtrength to ſpeak more fully to it) I ſhall limit my ſelf onely to one branch of Application.

Uſe. And I beſeech you, Brethren, ſuffer the word of Exhortation. O that my Counſel might be acceptable to you this day! That if indeed I ſhould never have liberty of preaching to you more, yet this Word, this Exhortation of mine (mine, did I ſay? nay, this Exhortation of the Apoſtle) might ever be freſh in your thoughts, and as it were, continually ſounding in your ears. O whatever you do, or leave undone, be ſure to look after your main buſineſs, to work out your Salvation.

And now what I might have brought in as *Reaſons* of the *Doctrine*, I ſhall offer to you here as *Motives* to enforce the *Exhortation*, to preſs you to the duty.

(1.) Conſider, there is no work you can ſet your ſelves about, ſo neceſſary as this, *to work out your Salvation.* Either do this, or you do nothing. Leave this undone, and you are undone for ever. You know the

wages

wages of the ſlothful and unprofitable ſervant, [*Caſt him into utter darkneſs, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.*] If we are loth to be at any pains for Heaven, this ſlothfulneſs ſhall be ſcourged at laſt with the endleſs, inſufferable pains of Hell. Though there were never ſo many Lions in the way to Heaven, yet ſhould we reſolve to go on: and otherwiſe we are ſure to fall into the Lions mouth, that our ſouls ſhall be made his prey.

(2.) Conſider, the work of our Salvation ſticks no where, if it ſtick not at us; it ſticks not on Chriſt's hand. O how did he *ſweat* at his work, the purchaſing of Salvation for us! It drave him into a *bloody ſweat*; yet he went thorow with his work. And now he is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to him*: and he would be the *Author of eternal Salvation unto all that obey him*, Heb. 5.9. This bleſſed work ſticks not on the Father's hand, who is *willing all men ſhould be ſaved*, firſt coming to the knowledge, belief, and obedience of the Truth. God excludes none from Salvation, who are willing to be ſaved in that way the Goſpel ſets forth: He excludes none, who exclude not themſelves. The work ſticks not at the Spirit neither, who is ſo oft moving and perſwading, yea ſtriving with us, to ſet about this good work. How unreaſonable a thing is it now, if the work ſticks on our hands, who are moſt concerned to promote it! Oh how ſtrange, if it ſhould ſtick here!

(3.) Conſider, this is the end of all the labours of God's Miniſters. They are ſent from God, to ſhew you the way of Salvation. They are God's Stewards, and Overſeers, to call you to, and direct you in your work. Ah, Beloved, it's well, if ſo many of them, as are now like to be laid aſide, be not therefore taken off their work to puniſh the negligence of the moſt,

becauſe

becauſe Hearers have been too mindleſs generally of their work. Verily, this will be unprofitable for you, that your poor Miniſters ſhould have beſtowed on you labour in vain. Though we would bleſs God for any the leaſt ſucceſs, for bleſſing our endeavours unto any; yet ſurely, we ſhould have had more comfort at this day, could we have ſeen more good done, that ſouls had leſs need of us.

(4.) Conſider, that diligence in working out of your Salvation would not obſtruct, but rather promote and bring a bleſſing on other works you have to take in hand. *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.* (let your main care be laid out that way, take moſt thought for your ſouls, and for the life to come) *and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.* Believe it, Sirs, *Godlineſs* is the greateſt *gain*: for *that it hath the promiſe, both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. See *Deut.* 29. 9.

(5.) Again, have not many of us done ſomething this way already? If we would not loſe the things we have wrought, then let us go through-ſtitch with our work. O let us not be *weary in well doing*, for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not. O my Friends, how ſad it is, to *faint* and *tire* in the *way to Heaven!* As it's the portion of ſuch to *lie down in ſorrow: Let us therefore fear* (as the Apoſtle exhorts in *Heb.* 4. 1.) *leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt, any ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* That we ſhould have been once in a fair way for Heaven, but ſince we were not careful to hold on our way, and therefore have fallen ſhort at laſt; O how would ſuch thoughts eternally torment us! Bleſſed be God, I may ſay in reference to many of you, as the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 Pet. 5. 12. That *this is the true Grace of God, wherein ye ſtand.* Wherein if you continue and perſevere, you ſhal ere long ſee the work

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of Grace in your ſouls crowned with Glory. And I am perſwaded, am confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in many of your ſouls, will perform, will carry on the ſame, until the day of Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore gird up the loins of your minds: up and be doing: for now is your Salvation nearer, than when firſt ye believed.

6. *I* add but this one conſideration more, The more pains you are at here in your life-time in working out your Salvation, the more peace and comfort may you expect in the hour of death. *The reſt of the labouring man is ſweet.* They that now are taking moſt pains for Heaven, when they come to dye, enter into peace indeed. O the vaſt difference betwixt thoſe who in *fear have wrought out their ſalvation* here, and thoſe that have *wrought out their deſtruction without fear*! We ſhall ſee a difference betwixt theſe one day. And as *I* have told you often, *I* tell you this once more, *It* is better, (better a thouſand thouſand degrees) to go toiling, and ſweating, to go ſighing and weeping, yea, or bleeding to Heaven, than to go ſlugging and ſleeping, or to go ſinging and dancing to Hell.

Now perhaps ſome of you are ready to ſay, Theſe are weighty conſiderations, and we are now convinced how much it is our duty and our wiſdom to ſet about this work, and therefore we reſolve upon it, if you would give us the beſt direction you can about it.

Here *I* would cloſe up this ſubject with ſome directions; but firſt let me give you two or three neceſſary cautions.

1. Take heed of having your heads, hearts and hands too deeply engag'd in the World. They that make that their great ſtudy and buſineſs to be rich in this World, take a ready way to deſtroy their ſouls, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. Many in their over-eager deſires to embrace

brace this preſent World, have let Heaven go, have loſt that for ever.

2. Take heed of following mens *examples* further than you ſee them to follow the *Rule* of God's Word: the world is ever full of bad examples; if we would walk ſafely, we muſt walk by Rule. If we think it enough only to do as the moſt, there is little hopes of our working out our ſalvation, *Matt.*7.13. The word of Chriſt muſt *judge* you hereafter, O let it *guide* you here. *As many as walk according to this Rule, peace ſhall be upon them, and mercy.* In matters of Religion, of Salvation, believe none, follow none, further than there is ground for their opinions and practices in God's written Word. Were we to follow mens examples, or mens traditions in matters of Religion, beſides the Scriptures, then will not this follow, *viz.* That the Scriptures are not a perfect Rule, (as the *Papiſts* teach) that it muſt be eeked out with unſcriptural traditions, and the commandments or documents of men. And do but once admit this, and we ſhall have no certain Rule at all.

3. Take heed of conſulting here *with fleſh and blood.* In the matters of our Salvation, not the *Fleſh* (who is ever at that, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*) but Conſcience, informed out of God's Word, muſt be our Counſellor. Our ſouls intereſt, and our carnal intereſt are many times croſs to one another. Hence it is, our Saviour ſo much inſiſts on the duties of ſelf-denial, and taking up the Croſs. Yea, he further tells us, *He that findeth his life, ſhall loſe it; and he that loſeth his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.* You know, great works are ſeldom perfected at a ſmall charge. A rich Mine, it will coſt a man ſomething before he comes to it; but when he has found it, it ſoon recompenſeth him for all his former pains and expences both. Heaven and Salvation is ſuch a Treaſure,

ſure, though we ſhould loſe all our earthly comforts, this would certainly repair all our loſſes, and make, and enrich our ſouls for ever.

4. Take heed of delaying to ſet to this work. Oh! have we not delayed too long? Have we not loſt time, and loſt ſpecial opportunities, loſt ſuch advantages for carrying on this work, as (for any thing we know) we may never enjoy again. It is *high time now to awake out of ſleep*, to ſhake off Spiritual ſloath, to apply our ſelves to the work in good earneſt: who knows but the day of our viſitation, the time of our life, and of God's patience, may be very near an end. It may be *the eleventh hour*. However, the longer it is ere we ſet to our work, the more difficulty we ſhall find in it.

I now come to the *Directions*.

☞ 1. See that you underſtand your work. *Be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord is*. Yea, ſtudy to be filled with the knowledge of his Will. Reſt not in good meanings. *My People are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge*, Hoſ. 4. 6. See here, though bare knowledge cannot ſave one; yet many a one is deſtroyed for lack of knowledge. Beloved, though we may not be permitted to preach publickly; yet I know not, that it would be any crime for us to inſtruct ſuch in private, as repair to us for aſſiſtance and advice. O that poor ſouls were as ready to make uſe of us, as we are willing to afford them the beſt help we can!

2. Be ſure your Ground-work be good. Build on the Rock, *Chriſt*; ſo indeed you need not fear but your Work will ſtand. *Other Foundation can no man lay*. If ye build beſides this Rock; or build partly on *Chriſt*, and partly on *your ſelves*, the work will come to nought. We are quite loſt and ruined in our ſelves, that we

must

muſt be taken off from our own bottoms, brought out of our ſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, or we cannot be ſaved.

3. Do all in *Chriſt's ſtrength*, Phil. 3.13. This way the Apoſtle *Paul* went to work. Then the work of our Salvation is like to go forward, when we have Chriſt, the Saviour, putting to his helping hand, and joyning with us. O as ever you would have your work to proſper, be ſure you take Chriſt along with you.

4. *As Noah being moved with fear*, fell to work, and *prepared an Ark to the ſaving of himſelf*, and of his houſe; ſo let us *work out our Salvation with fear*. We ſhould have a *reverent fear* towards God, to quicken us to duty, and to awe and make us exceeding ſerious in duty. Again, we ſhould have a *jealous fear* of Satan, and our own ſinful, deceitful hearts, to look narrowly to them, who (like *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*) will do but what they can, to hinder and take us off our work.

5. Labour much with God in prayer. Thus there were hopes the work would be going forward. Obſerve what immediately follows the Text, *It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure*. When it could be ſaid of *Paul*, *Behold, he prayeth*, then was *Ananias* ſent to confirm him, that he might receive his ſight, and be filled with the holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 9. 11, 17. The Work is great, to work out your Salvation, and it is poſſible you may want ſome helps you have had, yea, and meet with greater hindrances, new difficulties in it: O, pray in ſtrength to carry you thorow. It may be, you ſhall not have liberty to hear ſo much, to quicken you the more to prayer. You may have fewer hearing-opportunities, that you ſhall have more time to pray.

6. Up and be doing, when you can find the Spirit at work in your hearts. Attend to the motions of God's Spirit. This is a ſpecial ſeaſon not to be let ſlip, when

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we have an offer of his co-operating Grace.

7. Do all as in the ſight of God. Set the Lord ever before you. *Eye-ſervice* is a *fault* in our ſervants (condemned, *Eph. 6. 6.*) but a *vertue* in God's ſervants. Indeed could we but ply our work, while God's eye is on us, we ſhould never be idle, or ill-employed.

8. Let out the ſtrength of your ſpirits in the weighty matters of God's Law, and not about trivial, unneceſſary things. Such things as God no where requires: of which he ſayes, *In vain do they worſhip me after the traditions of men.* If we make our ſelves buſie in building hay and ſtubble on the Foundation, our work ſhall be burnt, and we ſhall ſuffer loſs.

(9.) Improve the day time, God hath alotted to you wherein to work. The day of Grace, O that we had known our day! we have had a large ſpace, and a fair ſeaſon of working granted to us; and yet I am afraid that (as to the moſt of us) little of our work is done. The conſideration of our former loſs of time, ſhould cauſe us henceforward to double our diligence. Now let not a day paſs over your heads, wherein you do not ſome way further the work of your ſalvation. Eſpecially improve the Lords Day. Sabbath-dayes are dayes of reſting from outward labours, from ſecular emploiments; yet not to be ſpent in idelneſs; they are the harveſt-time for our ſouls. And when will ye work, and beſtir your ſelves, if not in harveſt? The Lords Day is to be ſpent in ſuch works as more directly tend to the promoting of our Salvation. And the more you ſhould ſee this work going forward, the more would Sabbaths be your delight: You would not be for thoſe vain recreations, that ſinfull liberty, you may ſee others take, on God's *Holy-Day.*

(10.) Sit down and count the coſt. So you might be prepared to go thorow with your work. If you reckon

reckon right, you will ſee, let Salvation coſt what it can, it can never coſt too much. *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon* (ſayes the Apoſtle, and we need not fear to take his account here) *that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to follow.* I would have ſaid a word more to this, but have prevented my ſelf in ſpeaking to the third caution. Therefore here I conclude my Sermon, and Exhortation, deſiring that the Spirit of Truth may bring theſe things to your remembrance. Beloved could I have thought of any word, more profitable and generally uſeful for you, you ſhould have been ſure of it.

It may now be expected, I ſhould ſpeak ſomething touching my Deprivation. O that the Lord would lead Miniſters and People each into their own hearts, to find out the cauſe of this ſad diſpenſation; as we read of the Fathers: (in another ſenſe) He cauſeth us this day to paſs *under a cloud.*

I know ſome think, and will not ſpare to ſay, that we wilfully bring this *Obſcurity* on our ſelves. But the Lord, the ſearcher of all hearts, knows, and will manifeſt to the world one day, whether it was a meer humour, or whether indeed it was not Conſcience, that would not ſuffer us to comply with the things now impoſed. The Lord knows, we dare not adventure on the checks, reproaches, ſmitings of our own hearts and conſciences; though it follow, that our mouths be ſtopt.

Beloved, I cannot forget the reſpects you have ſhewn to me, how you choſe me at firſt, under great bodily weakneſs, and were willing to procure me aſſiſtance. I have not wanted outward encouragement among you: but above all, I have oft thought, when I have come to my publick work here (unpreparedly

enough, God knoweth) yet I have found the fruit, help, and benefit of your prayers for me. That I muſt acknowledge, thoſe few years I have ſpent amongſt you, have been the beſt, to me the moſt comfortable years I have ſpent in the Miniſtry. That might I have liberty, the Lord knows, *I* would moſt gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for you. Nothing but death ſhould part us. And howſoever we are ſeparated, yet *I* pray, we may live in one anothers hearts; and that we may more earneſtly than ever, ſtrive with God in prayer one for another. More *I* would have ſaid, but ſtrength and ſpirits fail; and further, *I* would ſpare you.

Now how glad ſhould we be, if thoſe that ſhall follow us, may do more good amongſt you, then ever we have or could have done. The Lord carry on his own Work, and (though He quite lay us aſide, though He ſhould never honour us ſo far, as to make any further uſe of us, yet) we could rejoyce, to ſee Gods Work proſpering, Religion (and that not only in a form, but) in the life and power of it promoted, and more and more ſet up in this place. So I commend you to God, and to the Word of His Grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are Sanctified.

SERMON

SERMON IV. by Mr. John Barret.

1 King. 18. 21. *And Elijah came unto all the People, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.*

IT is not a thing indifferent, what Religion men are of, whether they are for God, or *Baal*. That is a pernicious opinion, that affirms, You may be ſaved in any Religion. Again, it's not enough, that we are of the true Religion, but we muſt be true to it. And ſo much we may learn from faithful *Elijah* both his Doctrine and practice. When *Iſrael went a whoring* from God, he was *jealous* for the Lord, 1 *Kin.* 19. 10. He continued to ſtand for God, His Truth, and Worſhip, even when he could not ſee one more of his mind, to be his *ſecond*. So here he durſt plead for God, when there was none found to take his part. *Note*, (by the way) *that in the worſt of times, in times of moſt prevailing corruptions, yet the Lord is not wont to leave himſelf without witneſs.*

It's further obſervable, *Iſrael* had never degenerated more than in *Elijah*'s dayes; Yet never had they been priviledged with greater means. Many Prophets at this time raiſed up amongſt them, ſee *ver.* 4. of this Chapt. and *Elijah* among the reſt.

Note. Extraordinary means ſometimes ſerve only to heighten and fill up the meaſure of a Peoples ſins. See *Mat.* 23. 34, 35.

And now comes a dreadful Famine. The Prophets ſhut up, and the Heavens ſhut up together.

Elijah had foretold the drought, *Chapt.* 17. 1. And after three years he is ſent with good news, that rain was coming, *Chap.* 18. 1. *Ahab* ſeeing *Elijah*, v. 17. when he ſhould have acknowledged his own ſin and guilt, he wrongfully accuſeth God's Prophet. *Art thou he that troubleth Iſrael?*

Note. It is no new thing for God's Faithful Meſſengers to be accounted enemies to the State.

As *Elijah* ſaid, *I am not better than my Fathers.* Are we better than *Elijah*, and other of God's Prophets, who have been thus cenſured? Why then ſhould we look for better here?

Note. Again, obſerve, Wicked men are very prone to miſtake the cauſe of troubles and calamities.

See *Jer.* 44. 18, 20, 21, 22. where there is moſt guilt, commonly there is leaſt ingenuity, or grace to ſee and acknowledge it. It's natural unto ſinners, we have it by kind, from our firſt parents, to transfer all blame (as much as we can) from our ſelves to others.

But how deeply ſoever *Ahab* is pleaſed to charge him, *Elijah* is ready to clear himſelf and the Truth. He deſires that himſelf and the prophets of *Baal* might come to a fair *tryal*: So he doubts not but to prove himſelf by a miraculous ſign, to be the Servant and Prophet of the moſt high God, and ſhew them to be a pack of moſt wretched Impoſtors. *Ahab* yeelds to a diſcuſſion of this buſineſs, either out of *curioſity*, expecting ſome ſtrange diſcovery; or through *fear*, being awed with the preſent Judgment they lay under, not knowing but upon refuſal, the Prophet might have ſome other dreadful Meſſage to deliver; or in *hope* and expectance, upon his yeelding herein, to have the Judgment removed. Some ſuch way he is perſwaded, and enclined to call the prophets of *Baal*,

and

and the Heads of the people together unto Mount *Carmel*, where being aſſembled, *Elijah* ſets upon the people in the words read unto you, *How long halt ye?*——Where you have,

1. A chiding expoſtulation, [*How long halt ye--?*] Why halt ye? How inexcuſable is it, you ſhould halt in ſo plain a path, be in doubt, unreſolved where the caſe is ſo clear? Again, that you ſhould continue ſo long unſetled, contracting an ill habit to your ſelves. As an arm or leg put out of joint, and not looked to in time, hardly ever keeps its right place again.

2. A ſerious Exhortation, [*If the Lord be God, follow him:*] What is here added, [*if Baal, follow him*] is ſpoken by way of conceſſion, but indeed forbids the worſhipping of *Baal*, til it could be made out that *Baal* was God.

How long] There is an *Emphaſis* here. Thus the Prophet ſets an *Accent* upon their ſin of *halting*.

Note. *That long continuance in any ſinful courſe, is a great aggravation of ſin.* It is ſad at any time to fall into ſin, but far worſe to lie in ſin. Therefore he ſays not, *Why halt ye?* but more emphatically, *How long*---Many ſuch expoſtulations in Scripture, *Exod.* 16.28. *HOW LONG refuſe ye to keep my commandments?* Num. 14.11. *HOW LONG will this people provoke me?* And, *HOW LONG will it be ere they believe me, for all the ſigns which I have ſhewed among them*, Jer. 31.22. *HOW LONG wilt thou go about, O thou back-ſliding Daughter?* Hoſ. 8.5. *HOW LONG will it be ere they attain to innocency?*

How long halt ye] The ſpeech is metaphorical, to ſet forth their inconſtancy, unreſolvedneſs in Religion, their dividing betwixt *God* and *Baal*. As one that halts, inclines his body now to one hand, and ſtraightway to the other; ſo the *Iſraelites* would profeſs themſelves the

people of God, and ſeemed in ſome things to follow his Word, when in other things they were quite turned aſide to Idolatry. They were circumciſed, and thereby engaged to the ſervice of the true God, and yet were drawn over to the Worſhip of *Baal*, and bowed to that Heatheniſh Abomination. Now, but that I like not to ſtrain Metaphors, and writhe them beſides their proper ſcope, I might hint this note (from the phraſe of ſpeech here uſed) that they are but *lame* Services and Sacrifices, that men of *divided hearts* preſent unto God.

If the Lord be God, follow him.] Here the Prophet aſſayes to reaſon them out of their Idolatry, to argue them into the right way, the true Worſhip of God. As the Lord reaſoneth with them, *Mal.* 1.6. *If I be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my fear?* Note by the way,

That nothing is more reaſonable than the true Religion. The Lord never enjoined his ſervants to *pluck out their right eyes.* No, we may be his ſervants on better, and more honourable terms. I grant indeed, ſome points of Doctrine to be believed are moſt myſterious; yet what duties to be performed, that are not plain? It muſt be confeſſed, ſome *Articles of Faith* are above the reach of Reaſon, ſo that we cannot comprehend them (*e.g.*) the Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the God-head; the incarnation of the Son of God, *&c.*) yet being revealed by God in his Word, our belief of them is moſt reaſonable: Becauſe it is impoſſible we ſhould have greater evidence of the truth of any thing in the world, than the Teſtimony of the God of Truth, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived; What better proof can we deſire than the Word of God, that cannot lye? But then as for the Rules of practice laid down in God's Word, how ſweetly do theſe comport

with

with right Reaſon? As Reaſon will demonſtrate, that there is a God, an Eternal, Infinite Eſſence, who hath His being of Himſelf, and gives being unto all things elſe; ſo it will teach us, that this God ought to be worſhipped, ſhould have homage from all his creatures: And that he ought to be worſhipped according to his own Will and Mind, as he himſelf is pleaſed to preſcribe and appoint, rather than according to mens fancies and inventions: That the honour which is due to God, ſhould not be given to others, to idols. As *Eliah* here, *If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.* They that fall off from the true Religion, fall from right Reaſon too. They ~~that~~ do not act like men, that forſake the true God to follow idols; as is implied, *Iſa.* 46. 8. *Remember this, and ſhew your ſelves men; q. d.* One would not think ye were men; who would take you for reaſonable creatures, if ye dare to prefer, or compare dumb idols to the living and only true God?

Now the Doctrine I would ſpeak to from theſe words, you may obſerve from the firſt clauſe here.

Doct. *Halting in Religion is very ſad and ſinful.*

This point I ſhall endeavour (with the Lord's aſſiſtance) to explain firſt, then to confirm, and laſt of all to apply.

Firſt, For explication, that you may underſtand what it is to halt in Religion, take a few diſtinctions.

Thus; there is an halting in Principle; and again, there is halting in practice.

Again, Halting in Principle is two-fold; As this evil quality is ſeated either in the directing, or in the commanding-power of the ſoul. There is an halting in the heart or will, and in the mind or judgement.

1. When the heart is unfixed, unſtedfaſt, δίψυχος ἀνὴρ, the double-minded man, he that has an heart, and an heart, is partly for God, and partly for Mammon; he that is not reſolved for God, that is not brought to center wholly upon God, and that cleaves not to him with full purpoſe of heart, is one that halts in God's ſight, be his outward courſe and carriage before men never ſo fair and ſmooth. The Weathercock may point towards the Sun, while the wind is in a right corner, or it may ſeem to be fixed, when croſs winds are not abroad; and yet it is a Weather-cock. A falſe heart, an hypocrite may ſeem to look towards God, and Religion for a time, may ſeem well-grounded in Religion, who yet will turn aſide, will turn about when the winds are contrary.

2. When the Judgement is not ſetled, when men are wavering in opinion, like Reeds ſhaken with the wind, like children toſſed to and fro, now of one perſwaſion, by and by of another. It is ſad thus to halt. How can the traveller go on chearfully, who is uncertain whether he be in the way or no? Indeed, ſome are too credulous, *Prov.* 14. 15. *The ſimple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his goings.* The ſober, wiſe traveller, when he is a little at a ſtand, he deliberates with himſelf, and when others tell him, his way lies here or there, if he underſtands the coaſt of the Countrey, that helps him to judge whether they ſet him right or no. But the ſimple is ready to believe every one he meets with; and hence he is oft turned out of his way; I ſay, ſome are of too eaſie belief. Again, ſome are ſlow to believe, like *Nichodemus*, *How can theſe things be?* Like *Thomas* (except they may ſee and underſtand the reaſon and manner of things) except they may ſee things plainly, they will not believe. Yet there is no ſound Chriſtian, but he believes all

Divine

Divine Truth *implicitely*; that is, he believes the Scriptures to be moſt certainly true, and all things therein contained; though there are many things to be found there, which he hath no diſtinct knowledge of. I pray, miſtake me not, I am not for a Popiſh implicite Faith, a believing as the Church believes; but for our giving an aſſent univerſally to all that God hath ſaid. As there is a general repentance and humiliation for unknown ſins; ſo a general, implicite belief of unknown Truths. And further, the true Chriſtian hath an *explicite* belief of all Fundamental, neceſſary Truth. He muſt firſt ſtedfaſtly believe, ere he can ſincerely make a profeſſion of the Truth, or chearfully ſuffer for it.

Again, ſome are unreſolved concerning the *preſent Truth*. As the times vary, ſo doth mens oppoſition againſt the Truth. Sometimes one Truth mainly oppoſed, and ſometimes another. Now it is of very great conſequence to be ſetled in the Truth of the Seaſon. As the Apoſtle *Peter* ſayes of thoſe to whom he writes, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. that they were *eſtabliſhed in the preſent Truth*; ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ἀληθείᾳ, *i.e.* in the Truth of the Goſpel (*Non tantum promiſſa ſed reipſa exhibita*, as *Beza*) Chriſt was the Truth and ſubſtance of thoſe Types, and Shadows under the Law, but he was further off from them, then he is from Beleivers, under the Goſpel. Therefore thoſe legal Types and Shadows give place, the Body and Truth being come. This is one ſenſe given of that paſſage. But there is another interpretation given of it, which is to my preſent purpoſe [*eſtabliſhed in the preſent Truth*] *i. e.* in that Truth which at this preſent time is moſt under debate. As that was the great queſtion of thoſe dayes, Whether the way of the Goſpel, the Chriſtian Religion, or Judaiſm, was the true way? And thus ſeveral ages have raiſed *ſe-*veral controverſies about Religion. In every age there is

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ſome ſpecial Truth, which is as a κριτήριον, a *Shiboleth*, a mark of diſtinction betwixt ſound Profeſſours, and ſuch as are ſpurious. As (*v. g.*) this Truth, *That Jeſus is the Chriſt*, was the tryal of men at firſt, when the world ſtormed at him, and at all that confeſt his Name. Afterwards when Arrianiſm ſprung up, and prevailed in the world, the Deity of Chriſt, His being one in eſſence with the Father, was the touch-ſtone whereby Profeſſors were tried. Where Arminianiſm is rife, the point of ſpecial, Free Grace, becomes a main note of diſcovery. Sometimes that falſe and abſurd Opinion of Chriſt's real, corporal preſence in the Sacrament, hath been cried up by men of corrupt minds, as their great *Diana*; and perſecution ſet on foot, and raiſed up againſt thoſe, who would not come over to that groſſe conceit; then thoſe that were ſound in the Faith would be at more then ordinary pains, to be clear in the Doctrine of the Sacraments. Where Popery prevails, and mens traditions and inventions are ſet up in the room of, and as of equal credit or profit with the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of our Lord Chriſt, the Authority and abſolute perfection of the Sacred Scriptures, together with the Glorious Offices of Jeſus Chriſt are plainly ſtruck at, deſperately undermined. Which points, if men be not clear, and ſtedfaſt in, when the temptation comes, they will eaſily be carried away with the error of the Wicked. It is nothing to condemn old errors, that are laid in their graves long ſince, while one is not eſtabliſhed in the preſent Truth. Either not to hold this, or to hold it looſely, is of very dangerous conſequence. Only I grant, in controverſies about leſſer matters men, of ſober and pious ſpirits may be either at a ſtand, in the dark, or of different apprehenſions. Yet it is to be noted, that where ſuch are in the dark, and doubtful, they would

would gladly be informed, heartily pray for ſatisfaction, and would be as thankful for it, if once obtained: ſo, what opinion ſuch embrace, or receive, it is not becauſe ſuch an opinion would ſome way accord with their worldly intereſt: but becauſe in their apprehenſion it looks likeſt to Truth. A ſound Chriſtian receives the Truth, in the love of it: and you need do no more, to work him to the entertaining of any truth in Religion, then only ſatisfy his judgment, that it is a truth. He receives not Divine Truths for ſelf-ends, or by-reſpects; neither dare he (out of reſpect to carnal ſelf) reject any Truth. But for any to cheriſh doubts in their minds, upon deſign, that they might have ſomething to ſay, for their parting with the Truth, when it is dangerous to hold on in the profeſſion of it; to adventue no farther to *Sea*, then (if a ſtorm ſhould come) they might ſoon get to ſhore again; to engage no further in the profeſſion of the Truth, then they might face about, and make a fair retreat, when this meets with oppoſition; (though the men of this world will judge it a point of *Policy*, yet indeed) it is an argument of baſe *hypocriſie*, and *treachery*. And ſuch ſtudied *Scepticks* in Religion are next neighbors to downright *Atheiſts*. But a thin mud-wall betwixt them, that is ſoon broken down. But ſo much of halting in principle.

Again, there is halting in practice. Unevenneſs in converſation, when that is not ordered aright. Now it muſt be acknowledged, the beſt men on earth walk not ſo evenly with God as they ought. But here take a diſtinction or two. There is an halting in ſome particular ſteps or acts: and in ones ordinary, in a continued courſe. I ſay,

1. There is an halting in ſome particular ſteps, or acts. This is incident to the Saints themſelves. Such

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as walk uprightly in the main, yet at one time or other have their ſinful ſlips. Faithful *Abraham* halted before *Abimelech*. Yea, that Grace which ſeemed ſtrongeſt, even his Faith, was ſinew-ſhrunk ſometimes. As *Job's* patience was otherwhiles ſinking under his burdens. So *David*, the man after God's own heart, turned aſide once ſhamefully in the matters of *Uriah*. *Peter* halted with the *Jews*, *Gal.* 2. He is there charged amongſt others, that he did not [ὀρθοποδεῖν] foot it aright. Thus the beſt of God's Saints have ſometimes trod awry.

2. But then there is halting in a continued courſe. This is worſe than the former. The Faithful too oft meet with *rubs* in their way, that for the preſent ſtop them, but they recover themſelves again, and proceed on in a right courſe: Whereas all natural men are quite upon a wrong byaſs. Their heart is bent to backſliding from God. As there is a phraſe, Iſa. 44. 20. *A deceived heart hath turned him aſide.* Hypocrites have a corrupt byaſs within, that is ſtill drawing them aſide into crooked paths. And the double-minded man is *unſtable* even *in all his wayes.*

Again, there is an halting through infirmity, from the remainders of corruption: and a reſolved, deliberate halting, from the reigning power and predominancy of corruption.

The former is found in the Godly, but it is their grief and burden. *Peter* upon a ſudden puſh of temptation, halted down, and fell fouly, into a denial of Chriſt, and that with ſuch circumſtances as might make any Chriſtians ears glow and tingle to hear recited, *Mat.* 26. yet afterwards he was far from applauding himſelf herein. *He went out and wept bitterly.* As one of the Ancients ſayes of ſome that fell through weakneſs in time of Perſecution, *Vicit eos pœna, non averſit*

avertit perfidia ; negarunt ſemel, ſed quotidie confitentur ; negarunt ſermone ſed confitentur gemitibus, ululatibus, fletibus, liberis, non coactis vocibus. They denied in word, but afterwards confeſſed with ſighs, and groans, and tears. The Faithful ſometimes halt through *infirmity* ; but it is their *grief*. Others that halt *deliberately*, far unlike them, neither can they fairly pretend ſorrow for it ; Alas, it is their *choice* ; they approve of it, and think themſelves, wiſe in taking their liberty, in having ſo great a latitude about the matters of Religion, much wiſer then thoſe who are more precife, and ſtrait-laced.

But ſo much for Explication, to ſhew, what it is to halt in Religion, and how many wayes men are ſubject to it. Now that is very ſad, and ſinful, you have as much affirmed, Hoſ. 10. 2. *Their heart is divided : now ſhall they be found faulty.* God will be ſerved with all the heart, and with our whole ſoul : and to divide it betwixt Him, and others, is a thing He cannot endure, He cannot brook. It were eaſy to produce other Scriptures, that ſpeak to this purpoſe, but we ſhall have occaſion to make uſe of them in the following diſcourſe ; therefore I wave them here to proceed to the Demonſtrations of the Point.

And I ſhall evidence the great evil of halting in Religion, 1. From the nature of the thing it ſelf. 2. From the cauſe whence it proceeds ; 3. from the conſequences and effects.

Demon. 1. Halting in Religion muſt needs be exceeding evil, that conſidered in it ſelf, is directly oppoſit, and contrary to God, from whom the true Religion is derived, and unto whom it returns. It is both contrary to God's Nature, and to his Mind and Will.

Contrary to Gods *Nature*. He is ſtill the ſame, with him

him is *no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning*. Now how unlike to God are they that are off and on, ever and anon changing; one thing to day, another to morrow; yea, it may be, ſeemingly devout while on their knees, but vain and prophane when on their feet. *Good and upright is the Lord. Thou moſt Upright*. Thou moſt Upright doſt weigh the path of the juſt. Then ſurely they are contrary to him, who are for crooked ways. *The Lord that is faithful, Iſa.* 49. 7. *Heb.* 10. 23. He is faithful in all his promiſes to us. How unlike to God are they, who are falſe in their engagements, playing faſt and looſe with him!

And how contrary this halting in Religion is to God's *Mind* and *Will*, you may learn from what is ſaid of thoſe Mongrel-Worſhippers, 2 *King.* 17. 33, 34. In v. 33. it is ſaid, *They feared the Lord, and ſerved their own gods.* But in *v.* 34. *They feared not the Lord.* Such ſerving of God is as no ſerving of him. There's one [*But*] which takes off the luſtre of all *Amaziah* did; *He did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord*, BUT *not with a perfect heart*, 2 Chron. 25. 2. He began well, but afterwards turned away from following the Lord, *v.* 27. So, we find this as a *Blot* in the ſtory of ſome of the good Kings, whoſe Acts are recorded in Holy Writ; Such, and ſuch a one reigned well, did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, only the high places were not taken away: And here they fell ſhort.

Demon. 2. Halting in Religion muſt needs be very evil, which comes from ſuch ill cauſes. Such as the cauſe is, ſuch is the effect. Now here I ſhall not inſiſt on the *Fall* of mankind, which is indeed the prime cauſe of all that *halting* in Religion which is in the World. I ſhall not ſtay at that ſinning ſin, the corruption of mans nature (which was conſequent upon his fall)

fall) which makes way for all those sinful warpings, crooked windings & turnings in the course of our conversations. But I will come to some more particular and nearer causes. And so this halting I am speaking of, is either from a bad head, or from an evil heart, or from both.

1. From a bad head. As we may see those that are troubled with the *Vertigo*, &c. that have bad heads, how ill they can guide their feet. Thus, corruption of the judgement, false Principles received into the mind, cause the soul to halt and turn aside.

Many Hereticks of old thought it lawful enough to bow their bodies to an Image, to an Idol, so that they kept their hearts for God. But this was doubtless a false Principle. They whose hearts were true to God in *Israel*, would not so much as *bow the knee to Baal*.

Many of them taught, It was enough to believe with the heart; that confession with the mouth was not necessary: Though (as *Anastas. Sinait.* wel determines) to be restrained by any fear of persecution, *a libera fidei confessione, est quadam species Abnegationis*: Not to confess Christ, is to deny him. No mean betwixt these, *Matth.* 10. 32, 33. Some hold it lawful enough to profess the contrary to what they believe. *Jura, perjura, secretum prodere noli.* Whereunto the Doctrine of equivocation, and mental reservation, maintained by the Jesuits, is as near a kind as may be. The Christians in *Justin Martyrs* time were of other Principles, *We had rather dye* (sayes he) *for the Confession of our Faith, than either lye, or delude those that examine us; otherwise we might readily use the common saying, Jurata lingua est, animus injuratus est; My tongue only is sworn, my mind unsworn.* Such principles as these they were far from approving of. Some hold that men may be saved in any Religion. It is not very like-

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ly that ſuch ſhould ſtick to the true. But ſuch are the falſe principles that teach men to play faſt and looſe with God. Theſe would teach men to deny Chriſt with *Peter*, but not to repent with *Peter*.

Further, many halt from a doubting Conſcience, or from an erring Conſcience; and it is ſad being left to the conduct of but a doubting Conſcience, Rom. 14. 23. *Whatſoever is not of Faith, is ſin.* That man halts in his courſe, who is drawn to this or that, *ſed titubante Conſcientia* (as *Beza* terms it) with an hobling, heſitating Conſcience. The Apoſtles Rule, *v.*5. is, *Let every man be fully perſwaded in his own mind.* Again, how ſad is it, being led by an erring Conſcience! Indeed, ſuch a ſoul is in a miſerable ſtrait. Ordinarily it is a ſin to follow Conſcience when it erreth. When Conſcience determines that to be a ſin which is a duty; or that to be our duty which is a ſin, we cannot follow the dictate of Conſcience here, but we ſin. Nor can we go againſt Conſcience, though erring, but we ſin too. And therefore *wo unto them that call evil good, and good evill, that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs.* But this is one cauſe of halting in Religion, Corruption of the mind and judgement. When a man cannot well diſcern his way, no wonder if he be oft turning aſide.

2. From an evil heart. The corruptions of the heart are like a ſtrong byaſs, drawing the ſoul off from God. Here (1.) Unbelief. An evil heart of unbelief is one cauſe of halting. Heb. 3. 12. *Take heed, Brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: q. d.* Would you not depart from the living God: O then take heed of unbelief, the cauſe of ſouls departing from him. As it is by Faith that men come to God, (*Heb.* 11. 6.) ſo it is by unbelief that they depart from God. In *Heb.* 10. 39. They

that

that *draw back*, and they that *believe*, are oppoſed to one another. Pray, mark what it was that kept the Diſciples cloſe to Chriſt, when others fell off from him. *We believe and are ſure* (ſay they) *that thou art the Chriſt.* —*Lord, to whom ſhould we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life*, *John* 6. 68, 69. If we are halting in our courſe, it would argue us full of unbelief: That we do not believe the Word of God. Do we believe God's promiſes, and yet turn aſide for the vain proffers of a deluding world? Do we credit Divine threatnings; when yet theſe are not of ſo much force to deter us from ſin, as the frowns and threats of men to drive us into ſin? Did men fully believe there is ſo much evil and danger in every ſin, as the Word of God declares there is, they would immediately ſee cauſe to be more afraid of the *leaſt ſin*, than of the *greateſt ſufferings* in the world. Did men really believe what the Lord has ſaid of ſuch as obey him ſincerely, and follow him fully, they muſt neceſſarily conclude thence, that *integrity* is the beſt *policy*, and *Godlineſs* the greateſt *gain*. But when men chuſe either to decline a way of duty, or to comply with a way of ſin, for fear of ſufferings, or in hopes of ſome worldly advantage, this bewrayes abundance of unbelief. Thus men really call in queſtion the truth of what God hath ſpoken, and interpretatively give him the lye. And is not that a wicked heart that dares give God the lye?

Again, Halting argues we believe not God, that he is ſuch a God as indeed he is. So *holy*, that he hates all ſin; ſo *juſt*, that he will not acquit the wicked. A *gracious* God, *rich in mercy* to reward his faithful ſervants: *Infinite in Power*, to protect thoſe that fear and put their truſt in him; but to deſtroy all thoſe that forſake and rebel againſt him. A God every-where preſent, *omniſcient*, that eyes and obſerves us in all pla-

ces, companies, employments. Who would forſake, or turn aſide from the living God, that believes him to be ſuch a God? But unbelief is the root of diſobedience, (as in the *Greek*, the ſame word Ἀπιστια, ſignifies both.) This is the cauſe of inconſtancy, the root of Apoſtacy. How is it poſſible that any other than bad fruit ſhould ſpring from ſuch a bitter and poyſonous root?

2. Hypocriſie is another cauſe of halting. As Conſtancy is the daughter of ſincerity, ſo unſtaidneſs is the natural off-ſpring and product of Hypocriſie, *Pſal.*78. 37. *Their heart was not right with him*, (then it follows) *neither were they* [*ſtedfaſt*] *in his Covenant*. As on the other hand, the *upright in heart* are oppoſed to ſuch as *turn aſide into crooked wayes*, Pſal. 125. 45. Hypocriſie makes men zealous about needleſs ceremonies, but careleſs of the ſubſtance of Religion. The Scribes and Phariſees (who are therefore called hypocrites, *Matt.* 15.7.) were earneſt for the obſervation of their traditions, while they regarded not to go croſs to known, expreſs commands of God. They were not afraid in ſundry caſes to ſet aſide God's command, to hold up mens traditions, *Matth.*15.2,3. *Mar.*7.8. Hypocriſie wil put men upon ſome duties, while there is an allowed neglect of others, and thoſe more weighty, *Mat.*23. 23. Hypocriſie will take men off from ſome ſins, while other ſins are ſtill retained. As *Jehu* deſtroyed *Baal* out of *Iſrael*, but departed not from the ſins of *Jeroboam*, 2 *King.*10.28,31. It wil teach men to avoid open, groſs, ſcandalous ſins, while they have no care to get cleanſed from ſecret ſins, from inward, heart-corruptions, *Matth.*23.25, *&c.* Hypocriſie will allow men to condemn, will put them upon ſpeaking againſt the ſins of former times, while it teacheth compliance with the ſins of the preſent times. Hypocriſie will ſuffer men to live in thoſe ſins which they condemn in others,

Matt.

Matt. 23.29, *&c.* And what is all this but ſhameful halting? Hypocriſie will teach men to make a fair ſhew ſometimes, *to act a part* in Religion, for the compaſſing of ſome carnal end, which being once obtained, the Play is done, and they are found other men than they appeared and perſonated before. Hypocriſie is a *paint* that will not endure the *fire*. Let fiery tryals come, and theſe ſoon marre its beauty; lay open its deformity, Hypocriſie is but the putting of the ſheep-skin on a Wolf or Swine, which if once it be ſhorn, you would not expect it ſhould grow again. The laſt eſtate of the Hypocrite ordinarily is worſe than the firſt; *Matth.* 12. 45.

3. Baſe ſinful ſelf-love, and inordinate love of the world. Carnal ſelf is a great hinderance and pull-back to us in a Chriſtian courſe. Therefore Chriſt calls upon every one that would follow him, to deny himſelf, *Matth.* 16. 24. Our baſe hearts will ſeem to comply with a Divine Command at one time, but out of ſelf-reſpect; and diſpence with the ſame command at another time, out of ſelf-reſpect. Some that were conſtant in the performance of Family-duties, ſeemingly ſtrict in the obſervation of Sabbaths, *&c.* while theſe things have been in *faſhion*, can readily lay all religious duties aſide, when they become a *matter of reproach*. Some that ſeem to ſtear their courſe Heavenwards while they meet with proſperous gales, who can ſoon tack about when the winds are contrary. How ſhould they do other than halt in Religion, who have more reſpect to their Credit and Reputation in the world, than to God's Honour? See *John* 12. 42, 43. *How can ye believe* (ſayes our Saviour) *who receive honor one of another*, *John* 5.44. As the Apoſtle *James*, *Whoſoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*, Jam. 4. 4.

Many love their carnal eaſe more than their work, more than God's ſervice. Theſe are only for the *eaſie part* of Religion, and ſo halt in Religion. Many have more love to their Eſtates, their earthly poſſeſſions: And theſe will be only for the *cheap part* of Religion, and halt that way in Religion. *This Oyntment might have been ſold for ſo much*, ſays *Judas*, whoſe mind was chiefly on the Bag. Holy *David* was of another diſpoſition, *I will not ſerve the Lord with that which coſts me nothing*. One thing I muſt tell you here, If our Religion be not ſuch as weans our hearts from the world, the world wil deaden them to the exerciſe of Religion. If the love of God, we all profeſs to have, be not ſuch as conſumes inordinate love to the world, our love of the world will ſmother the love of God, not ſuffer that to live and breath in us. *See Matt.6.24.*

4. A ſinful cowardize and fear of man. *Prov.29.25.* *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare.* *Ponit offendiculum*, it cauſeth many to ſtumble. *Ponit tendiculam*, it layes many faſt. As we read, *John 7.12,13.* *Among the people ſome ſaid* of our Saviour, *He is a good man---Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.* *Lavater* *Tremel.* *Ludol.* *Carth.* *Seducit turbas, clarius Sonabant. Sed Bonus eſt, preſſius ſuſurrabant.* There were great numbers, and many of great note in the world, that cryed out aloud, *He ſeduceth the people.* But that he was a *good man*, it was whiſpered amongſt ſome, but ſcarce any found that durſt ſpeak it out.

The fear of man would plainly argue our forgetfulneſs of God, *Iſa.51.12,13.* By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil, (*Prov.16.6.*) whereas by the fear of men, many depart from the Lord. The former is a *Soveraign Antidote* againſt ſin, an excellent means to preſerve us from it, (*Neh.5.15. Exod.20.20.*) The latter

latter greatly expoſeth unto ſin. As we have a ſad inſtance in *Peter*, being ſurprized with fear, how was he whorried into the denial of his Lord and Maſter; when as he ſhould have been more afraid of this, than of a thouſand deaths. Thus you have heard ſome of the cauſes of halting in Religion. Other might be named, but I forbear.

Demon. 3. Halting in Religion may further appear to be exceeding evil, in regard of the evil effects, the ſad conſequences of it: And that, both in reſpect of God, of the godly, of ſinners, and of ones ſelf.

1. In reſpect of God. 1. Hereby God is diſhonored; his Name polluted. It was a Law among the *Jews*, Lev. 21. 9. *The daughter of any Prieſt, if ſhe profane her ſelf by playing the Whore,* [*ſhe profaneth her Father, ſhe ſhall be burnt with fire.*] More holineſs would be expected in ſuch a one, as the daughter of a Prieſt; thus the crime in her was greater. She prophaneth the Name of her Father. Then what a prophaning the Name of God is this, for ſuch as are called his People, to go a whoring from him? The ſinful ſlips and falls of Profeſſors caſt dirt (as it were) on the Name of God; ſince they are taken to belong to him. And how juſt a thing it is that God ſhould ſpit in their faces, put them to ſhame, who care not thus to throw dirt in his face.

Thus indeed the ſins of ſuch as profeſs God's Name, and ſtand in a nearer relation to him, are worſe than the ſins of others. The miſcarriages of ſtrangers, of thoſe that are without; reflect not ſo much on God to his diſhonor, as the miſcarriages of thoſe who are within his Houſhold and Family, as the Church is called. The *Commands* of God are *violated* and broken by others alſo; yet the holy *Name* of God is not ſo *polluted* by others. *But the Name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you*, as it is written, *Rom.* 2. 24. Better

in this reſpect, men would never take up a Profeſſion, than to reſt here, without taking any care for a ſuitableneſs of converſation, *Ezek.* 20. 39. *As for you, O houſe of Iſrael, thus ſaith the Lord God, Go ye, ſerve every one his Idols; and hereafter alſo, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy Name no more — q.d.* If ye will not be ruled by me, then go and ſerve your Idols altogether, appear what you are: but make no more ſhew of being my People, to reproach and diſgrace me. It was a great diſhonour to God, that it ſhould be ſaid, *Theſe are the Lord's People — Ezek.* 36. 20. Hence, as the ſins of thoſe who have his Name called on them, are ſo far worſe, a greater diſhonor to God than others: ſo the more open and publick their warpings are, ſtill the more diſhonour unto God. Therefore the Lord was ſo quick and ſmart with *Moſes*, with that eminent Saint, that faithful Servant of his, that Favourite of Heaven, *Moſes*, who was ſo far honoured, that the Lord ſpake to him face to face, even as a man ſpeaks to his friend: Yet, *Numb.* 20. 12. The Lord ſpake unto *Moſes* and *Aaron*, *Becauſe ye believe me not, to ſanctifie me in the eyes of the Children of Iſrael; Therefore ye ſhall not bring this Congregation into the Land which I have given them.* For this halting of yours before the Children of *Iſrael*, you ſhall fall ſhort of *Canaan*, you ſhall not have the honour of leading them into the promiſed Land. Now if you do but look back to *Numb.* 11. 21, 22. you will find *Moſes* bewraying unbelief: but privately, before God. And there the Lord only reaſoneth him out of it, *v.* 23. *Is the Lord's hand waxed ſhort?* Whereas in this other place, when he ſmote the Rock twice, his ſin was publick; here *Moſes* and *Aaron* diſhonour God in the view of the People; wherefore the Lord clapt that ſmart ſentence on their backs, which no importunity in prayer could ever take off again, or get reverſed. See *Deut.* 32. 50, 51. 2. Hereby

2. Hereby the Truth and Wayes of God are much diſcredited. They are *deep wounds*, which the Truth receives in the houſe of its *Friends*. It is long, ere the *ſcars* wear out. When any the profeſſed followers of Chriſt and his Truth, are taken tripping, Religion it ſelf muſt bear the blame, and the way of Truth be evil ſpoken of. This is their Religion, ſay carnal men. How earneſtly doth the Apoſtle exhort Chriſtians in general to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith* they are *called*, *Eph.*4.1. And *Phil.*4.27. *Only let your converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel.* So likewiſe he layeth a ſtrict charge here upon ſeveral ſexes, eſtates, and conditions. *The younger women* muſt take heed, they *give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully*, 1 *Tim.*5.14. *Servants* that are under the yoke muſt ſee to carry ſo in their places, *that the Name of our God*, and [his Doctrine] *be not blaſphemed*, 1 Tim.6.1. *The aged women muſt be patterns of holineſs, ſetting others a good example* [*that the Word of God be not blaſphemed*] *Tit.* 2. 5. Chriſtians halting in the way, cauſeth others to ſpeak evil of the way of Chriſtianity.

3. The Kingdom of God, and His Intereſt is by this means weakned. It loſes more by the *haltings* and *falls of Profeſſors* ordinarily, than by the *fury of Perſecuters*. As *Jacob* complained of his Sons cruelty towards the *Shechemites*, Ye have troubled me, *to make me ſtink among the inhabitants of the Land*, who will gather themſelves together againſt me. As *David* complained of *Joabs* baſeneſs in falling upon *Abner*, *I am this day weak, though anointed King.* The Kingdom of Chriſt is weakened and obſtructed very much, by His followers *haltings*, and *miſcarriages*. Others are hereby kept off from Religion, who otherwiſe might have been coming on. Yea, they that decline the profeſſion of Religion for fear of Perſecution, and ſuffer-

ings, are not ſo far from the Kingdom of God, as thoſe who are caſt off this other way. Theſe have a loathing of Religion, it ſtinks with them; whereas the other may be convinced in their conſciences, that it is the beſt Way, the Way of the Righteous, only they are diſcouraged from cloſing with it, becauſe of thoſe hard meaſures the Righteous ordinarily meet with in this world. But this ſhews us the great evil of mens halting in Religion, this hindereth the progreſs of Religion, this obſtructeth the Truth and Kingdome of Chriſt, that the Goſpel cannot have ſo free a courſe and paſſage, as otherwiſe it might. Hence many look upon Religion as a way of deceit, as if it taught men to play the hypocrites, to be one thing in *Profeſſion* and the contrary in *Practice*. Which is as true, as that the Sun is the cauſe of darkneſs. Indeed God hath given a *ſtreight* and *perfect Rule*, to draw all the *lines* of our converſations by: but when our hand *ſhakes*, when we *turn aſide* in our courſe, keep not cloſe to our *Rule*, many fooliſh by-ſtanders are ready to cenſure the *Rule* it ſelf, and ſay, that is *crooked*.

2. *In reſpect of the Godly.* For any that have entered into Religion to *halt* in Religion.

1. It is a matter of reproach to the Godly in general. *Let not them that wait on thee be aſhamed for my ſake*, ſayes the Pſalmiſt. O why ſhould the Faithfull be put to ſhame for our ſakes? Indeed they will not think much to bear reproach for the Lords ſake: but Why ſhould they be reviled, evil-ſpoken of, why ſhould they bear reproach for our ſakes? As *Nehemiah* ſayes of *Shemaiah*, that Falſe-Prophet, *Nehem. 6. 13. therefore was he hired, that I ſhould be afraid, and ſin, and* [*that they might have matter for an evil report.*] This the wicked wait, and long for, and ever ly at catch here, to get any matter for an evil report. *To ſay, Theſe are your Profeſſors.*——

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2. It's an occaſion of ſorrow to the beſt of Gods People. It greives them at the heart, to ſee the Name of God thus diſhonoured, Religion diſcredited, poor ſouls endangered. Certainly the Apoſtle *Paul* was not a little moved, greived, at *Peters* halting, *Gal.* 2. when he *withſtood him to his face*. Now, is it nothing to make the hearts of the Righteous ſad, whom God would not have made ſad?

3. It's an occaſion of ſin to thoſe that are weaker. *Peters* judaizing was a compelling of the *Gentiles* to do likewiſe, *Gal.* 2. 14. Thus ſome of the *Jewiſh* Converts, yea, *Barnabas* himſelf was carried away with the diſſimulation, *ver.* 13. This is a teaching the Lords People to tranſgreſs. We ſhould fear to uſe our own liberty, where weak Chriſtians would be ſtumbling at it. (*Rom.* 14. 13, 21. 1 *Cor.* 8. 9, 12.) We may be an occaſion of wounding the conſciences of our weak Brethren ſometimes, by our prepoſterous, unadviſed uſe of things *indifferent*, and *lawful* in themſelves: And if it be ſinful, to uſe our *liberty*, where we may know it will, offend and ſcandalize our weak Brethren; *how much more to halt outright, and lay the ſtumbling-block of our iniquity before them*?

3. In reſpect of ſinners. How ſad are the conſequences of this *halting* in Religion? Wo to the world, becauſe of offences. Wo to ſinners.

1. Hereby their *minds* are further *prejudiced* againſt Religion and Godlineſs. And what a ſad thing is it, that any who profeſs to ſerve God, ſhould carry ſo, as to prejudice others againſt his ſervice. True it is, ſinners have naturally a very great prejudice againſt God and Godlineſs. The carnal mind is enmity againſt the Law of God. No need to do any thing to increaſe this prejudice, and enmity found in them. But what is ſaid of the Prieſts, *Mal.* 2. 8. *Ye are departed out of the*

the way: [*Ye have cauſed many to ſtumble at the Law*] is true of halting profeſſors. Whereas they ſhould be *Guides* to the *blind*, *lights* to them that are in *darkneſs*; by halting in Religion, and walking unſutably to their profeſſion, they are *Blinds* rather, and *Stumbling-blocks* before others. But ſee *Levit.* 19. 14. *Thou ſhalt not put a ſtumbling-block before the blind.* And Deut. 27. 18. *Curſed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.*

2. Hereupon their *mouths* are oft *opened* againſt Religion. Many ſet their mouth againſt Heaven, ſeeing ſuch halting in Religion. It ought to be our care, by wel doing, by our ſtrict, circumſpect, and upright walking, *to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.* We ſhould be ſo wary, that they, that even *watch* for our *halting*, would fain take us tripping, might have no evil to ſay of us. Our converſations ſhould be *winning*, at leaſt *convincing*. But uneven walking, all halting in Religion will open the mouths of unruly talkers. How ſad to give the wicked any occaſion to blaſpheme!

3. Hereby their *hearts* are further *hardened* in their own ſin and wickedneſs: and their *hands* more *ſtrengthened*. As is ſaid of thoſe lying Propheteſſes, *Ezek.* 13.22. *Ye have ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way.* This is a great encouragement to ſinners, to go on in their evil wayes, to ſee others miſcarry. *Noah*'s being once overtaken, emboldens many to go on in a courſe of Drunkenneſs. *David*'s once falling into that foul ſin of Uncleanneſs, Adultery, makes ſome altogether ſhameleſs in ſinning, ſo that they no more regard how they *wallow in the mire.* Biſhop *Gardiner*, one of the *Marian Apoſtates* and *Perſecutors*, cryed out on his death-bed, *That he had denied his Maſter with* Peter, *but never repented with* Peter. Thus, halting in Religion is very miſchievous to ſinners,

ners, an occaſion of their overthrow, an haſtening of their deſtruction, as it puts them further and faſter on in a way of tranſgreſſion. Now what a ſad thing is it, thus, to have a hand in the *ſins*, and conſequently in the *ruine* of the ſouls of others. Inſtead of leading and drawing men towards Heaven, to lye in their way, and to be an occaſion of their ſtumbling and downfall into Hell!

4. In reſpect of ones ſelf.

1. Thus Conſcience is defiled, guilt contracted. Such ſhall be *found faulty*, Hoſ. 10. 2. As *Peter* was to be blamed, *Gal.* 2. 11. He was an holy man, an eminent Apoſtle, yet his Holineſs, his high Calling, would not hide his miſcarriage here; but on the contrary, was greatly blemiſhed by it. Men ſoil themſelves ſhamefully by halting, and turning aſide into any crooked wayes. See 2 *Pet.* 2. 20.

2. There is a cauſe of inward troubles. Thus Conſcience is gauled. Halting in the body (you know) is very troubleſom and painful. *Great peace have they that love God's Law*, and walk on evenly with upright hearts in that plain path; they ſhall find his wayes, wayes of pleaſantneſs, and his paths peace. Whereas they that leave the *paths of uprightneſs*, walk in *wayes of darkneſs*, *Prov.* 2. 13. where they ſhall meet with little quiet or comfort. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and gladneſs for the Upright in heart*: yea, unto the Upright there ariſes *Light in the darkneſs*. In midſt of outward troubles he hath ſtill much inward joy and peace. *This is our rejoycing* [*the Teſtimony of our Conſcience*] *that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, [*not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God*] *we have had our converſation in the world.* This was a comfort to holy *Job*, Job 23. 10, 11, 12. To the Faithful, *Pſal.* 44. 17, 18. But halting in ones courſe uſes to bring great inward troubles. *Da-*

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vid's fall wounded his conſcience, and a good while after that, he *bled inwardly*, and complained (*Pſa.* 51.) that he went with *broken bones*. What followed *Peter's* halting in the High-Prieſt's hall? He went out, and wept bitterly. Others that have forſaken the Truth, to avoid Sufferings, have thereupon been arreſted with thoſe terrors of conſcience, and haunted with thoſe inward horrors, in compariſon of which the greateſt ſufferings from men were light and eaſie to be born; as it was with *Francis Spira*.

3. Halting in Religion expoſes and enclines one to fall further and more fouly, if not to fall quite away. See what followed upon *David's* halting in the matters of *Urtah*: Alas, he was not ſet ſound, he went not upright again for many months after; It was a great while ere he was fully recovered, and cured of it. *Peter* giving a little way to ſin, and conſulting more his outward ſafety, than his inward peace, ſoon halted down, and fell into a ſhameful denial of his Maſter, even with curſing and ſwearing, as if he would that way ſeem to have been rather trained up in the Devil's School, than in the School of Chriſt. O Sirs, how ſad it is to be halting in Religion, to be winding and turning here; alas, ſuch know not what they may turn to at laſt! As when a man begins to fall down a ſteep hill, he knows not where he ſhall ſtop; he may fall to the bottom, and (for any thing he knows) be cruſhed in pieces with his fall. Thus ſome who carried fair ſometimes, after they began to halt, and decline in Religion, have proceeded from evil to worſe: Some have fallen from one Errour to another, till at laſt they have come to be meer *Scepticks* and *Seekers*; to be any thing, and juſt nothing: Others have fallen from a plauſible profeſſion, firſt, to *immoderation* in the uſe of lawful things, to a *pampering of the fleſh*, and an over-eager purſuit of their

outward pleaſures, and vain recreations; and from thence to *down-right prophaneſs*, viſible ungodlineſs, and ſo at laſt into plain *Atheiſm*. Ah Beloved, what need to look well to our feet here! Halting in Religion is next ſtep to Apoſtacy, falling off from Religion. If this halting be not *cured*, it will end in Apoſtacy, will *turn us* quite *out of the way*, Heb. 12. 13.

Now lay all theſe things together, and ſure it will appear very evil to halt in Religion.

1. If we look at the thing it ſelf, it is directly contrary to God. 1. To his Nature and Attributes; 2. to his Mind and Will.

2. If we look to the cauſes of it. 1. It argues great corruption of the judgment. 2. A corrupt heart; An evil heart of unbelief, hypocriſy, &c.

3. If we look at the effects and conſequences: both in reſpect of God, of the Godly, of ſinners, and of our ſelves——

Uſe, 1. *For Inſtruction.* Seeing it is ſo exceeding evil for men to halt in Religion. 1. It ſhould teach us to be very cautious, how we cenſure others to halt here without ground. We ſhould fear to lay ſuch an *heavy charge* as this upon thoſe that are *innocent*. How ill the Lord took it from *Job's* Friends that they were ſo raſh in their cenſures of him. *Gal.* 2. 14. *When I ſaw, that they walked not uprightly— I ſaid unto Peter before them all, &c.* [*When I ſaw*—] So the matter muſt be evident. And when it is ſo, then let men tax, then reprove, and ſpare not. The caſe was plain here before *Elijah*, that the People were drawn off from God, and running after *Baal*. This I thought good to note here to prevent the miſ-application of the Doctrine.

To hold Communion in publick Worſhip, which is the Worſhip of God for *ſubſtance*, though there are corruptions

ruptious in the *manner of administration*, when Christians are careful not to communicate in those corruptions, but mourn at, groan under them, breath after, pray for purity in God's Worship; I say, to joyn in publick worship that hath corruptions in it, with these qualifications, is unjustly censured as *halting* betwixt God and *Baal*. While all necessary, Fundamental Truth is publickly professed, and maintained in a Church, is taught and held forth in publick Assemblies, and the corruptions there, (though great, yet) not such as make the Worship cease to be God's Worship; nor of necessity to be swallowed down, if one would communicate in publick Worship; while any Christian (that is watchful over his heart and carriage, as all ought ever to be) may *partake* in the one, without being *active* in, or *approving* of the other; there God is yet present, there He may be spiritually worshipped, served acceptably, and really enjoyed. The Sacrifice of a faithful *Israelite*, an *Elkanah*, was pleasing to God, even when *Hophni* and *Phineas* were Priests. And no doubt, it was written for our instruction, our Lord Christ, (who is and ought to be a Christians pattern, who could never be charged with the least halt in his course, who never trode one step awry, who was as zealous for purity in God's Worship, as much against corrupt mixtures of mens inventions there, as any can pretend to be: Never was there any in the world of whom that was so true, *The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up*; Yet we find) He used to attend on the publick Worship in his time, notwithstanding the many corruptions brought into it, and notwithstanding such formalists, and superstitious ones as the Scribes and Pharisees (who were ready to magnifie their traditions, above the Word of God; though such as these) did officiate in it; *Luke* 4. 16. That He went into their Assemblies,

Aſſemblies, not to *joyn in* any worſhip they had amongſt them, but only to *bear witneſs againſt* their corruptions, is no where written; but rather the contrary is held forth in Scripture, where he acknowledgeth himſelf a member of the Church of the *Jews*, and approves of, and juſtifies their Worſhip, as right for the ſubſtance, that Salvation might be attained therein, which he denies to be attainable in any other way of Worſhip, then uſed among the Gentiles, *John* 4. 22. *Ye worſhip ye know not what* (ſaith Chriſt to the woman of *Samaria*) *We know what we worſhip* (including himſelf among the reſt, that worſhipped God aright) *for Salvation is of the Jews.*

But may this ſuffice here, to prevent a great miſtake, and miſ-judging, which many Chriſtians of late have diſcovered themſelves but too forward unto?

2. This alſo lets us ſee, how ſad it is to be of the Popiſh Religion, which teacheth halting. This is a Religion, that teacheth halting; wherein it differeth from ours, from the true, it teacheth nothing but halting. Halting *in Faith*, enclining in part to God's written Word, and in part to their unwritten Traditions. Halting *in Obedience*, betwixt God's Commands, and the Decrees and Conſtitutions of the Pope, or their Church. Halting *in Worſhip*, betwixt God and Saints; betwixt God, the living God, and dumb and ſenſleſs Images. The Apoſtle *Peter* was blame-worthy, when he halted betwixt the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: (*Gal.*2.) The Popiſh Religion allows and teaches Diſſimulation and Equivocation before men. The Religion of the *Samaritans* was a ſtrange compoſition, when they *feared the Lord*, and *ſerved their own gods*: ſuch is the Religion of the Papiſts, who add to the Worſhip of God a multitude of Jewiſh and Paganiſh Rites and Ceremonies. How intollerable is their confounding of *Chriſt* and

Moſes

Moſes; how abominable their joyning their own works with Chriſts merits in the buſineſs of Juſtification? How diſhonourable unto Chriſt, and dangerous, undoing to themſelves, their depending partly on *Chriſt's mediation*; and partly on the *Saints interceſſion*? O What a miſerable *lame* Religion Popery is! A *Wavering* Religion! A Religion (as we may hope) that ſhall not *ſtand* long. It is ſure to fall, and to be cruſht in pieces with its own weight. The Lord keep us and ours, that we never come under it. Better dye and periſh in a *Wilderneſs*, than return to this ſpiritual *Egypt*.

Uſe 2. For *Reprehenſion* and *Humiliation*, that ſo much halting in Religion is to be found amongſt us.

1. What halting among our common Profeſſors!

Halting between *GOD* and *Mammon*. Though you know what Chriſt ſayes, *Matth.6.24*. You cannot give your hearts both to God and to the World. If you would give them to God, you muſt take them off from the world: if they are ſet on the world, you do not give them to God. *Ezek.* 33. 31. Again,

I wiſh there were nothing to be found, like halting between God and *Baal*. Some more obſervant of the *Cuſtom* of the place, than of the *Scripture-rule* in their Worſhip. Some that worſhip God partly according to his Word, and partly after their own and others fancies, beſides, or againſt the Word. How ill the Lord takes this, may be gueſſed at, by that paſſage, *Matth.* 15. 9. *In vain do they worſhip me, q. d.* they might as well do nothing.

Halting between *God* and *Belial*. *Modo Eccleſias, modo Theatra replentes*: Some for the place of God's Worſhip to day, and for a Playhouſe, or the Tavern, or Alehouſe to morrow. One while for the Service of God, another while for the ſatisfying of their luſts. Some that have their good moods now and then (their Con-

Conſciences being awakened by a powerful Sermon, or ſome ſmarting rod, by a ſharp correction) come to them now, and you would think they were fully reſolved to break off their ſins, and turn to God; whereas a temptation doth no ſooner preſent it ſelf again, but they are drawn away by their own luſts, and enticed,

How many that are turning with the various companies they fall into. That can carry fairly and ſmoothly, while in company with ſuch as are of note for Religion, and an holy ſtrictneſs; and are as ready to fly out, be vain, and carry like one of the *fools in Iſrael*, when they are in place were they may take their liberty, in the company of ſuch as are looſe and prophane.

How many that will turn with the times, ſeem very forward in Religion, while it is a thing in faſhion; but caſt it off again, if once it grows out of credit in the world. Like the *Samaritans*, who would pretend kinderd to the *Jews*, but only while they were in a proſperous ſtate.

2. Come to the beſt of us, ſuch as are upright in the main; O how much halting yet may ſuch be taxed with! How great unevenneſs in the frame of our ſpirits.; our hearts ſometimes up in holy duties, but ſoon down again: our affections ſometimes lively; but ſoon flat, and dead again. Alas, What inconſtant creatures are we! *Aliud ſtantes, aliud ſedentes.* One thing in religious ſervices, another out of them. If we get any *warmth* into our ſpirits on the Lords Day, how ſoon that we *take cold* again, when we *go into the world*. How great unevenneſs in the courſe of our converſation: At one time a little diligent, at another time exceeding ſloathful in our buſineſs. One while ſerious, and conſcionable in the practiſe of ſecret duties, another while too ready upon any ſlighty occaſion

to neglect and omit them, or elſe to ſlubber them over. One while *fruitful* in our diſcourſe, deſirous to do ſome good to all with whom we converſe; other while as *barren* as may be.

How faint and weak ſometimes in our reſiſtance of ſin; whereas we ſhould go from ſtrength to ſtrength. Do we not many times ſuffer a foiled, routed enemy to rally again? are we not ſometimes worſted by thoſe very luſts, which before we had put to flight, driven out the field. What ſhall we ſay, that after ſome conqueſt of our corruptions, we have turned our backs again, have yielded unto and been overcome of them?

How ready to ſhrink at the apprehenſion, the approach of Sufferings! How little have we to ſay for God, his Truth, Miniſters, &c. when there may be the leaſt danger in owning God, and His Intereſt here? Like theſe in the Text, *anſwered never a word*. How willing to ſpare our ſelves! Too ready to venture the favour of God, to keep the favour of men; or to venture upon His diſpleaſure to avoid mans diſpleaſure. Other whiles we ſeem full of confidence in God, and ſometimes again as full of fears. O what cauſe have the beſt to be humbled, even ſuch as do not hover, or hang in ſuſpence betwixt two contrary wayes, ſuch as are ſet in the right way, yet alas, we go on very weakly, lamely here. What cauſe to complain of feeble knees! Do we not find a clog of corruption at our foot, which is a great hindrance to us in our ſpiritual courſe? There is fleſh as well as ſpirit; and hence (as *Jacob* halted in his wreſtling with God, ſo) do we halt in our walking with God. The Child of God (ſayes Mr. *Perkins*) is like a lame man, that *goes the right way*, but yet *halts at every ſtep*. This ſhould be matter of humiliation, and lamentation to us all.

Uſe.

Uſe 3. Hence, be perſawded to take heed of halting in Religion. Now my work ſhall be to give you ſome moving conſiderations, to preſs you to an holy care and watchfulneſs over your ſelves here: and afterwards conclude with *Directions*. *Motives*.

1. *Conſider*, halting is very unſeemly. The Linſey-woolſey-coat is but an uncomely garment. How ill doth it become a Child of God, *the Kings daughter*, Pſa. 45. 13, 14. *Lameneſs* or crookedneſs is a *deformity* in the body: Not to walk uprightly is very uncomely among Profeſſors. There is an expreſſion, *Pſa.* 52. 9. *I will praiſe thee for ever, and I will wait on thy Name* [*for it is good before thy Saints.*]. Conſtancy and perſeverance in God's Worſhip and Service, and in our dependance upon Him, this is *good before the Saints*: And the contrary, to ſee ſouls falling off from God, and His Wayes, is evil in their account. They bluſh, are aſham'd to ſee it: It is a ſad, and ſtrange ſight to them. *Gal.* 1. 6. *I marvel* (ſaies the Apoſtle to theſe halting, backſliding Profeſſors, *I marvel*) *that you are ſo ſoon removed from Him, that called you into the Grace of Chriſt.* Yea this is unſeemly, not only before the Saints, but before wicked men. Hence it is, that the uncircumciſed *Philiſtines* do ſo rejoyce, and triumph, when they can ſee, or hear that any of *Iſraels Worthies* are fallen. As the Pſalmiſt complains, *Pſa.* 38. 16. *When my foot ſlippeth, they magnifie themſelves againſt me.* They inſult over the Righteous, when they ſee them *fall into any trouble* and *diſtreſs*; and no leſſe, when they *fall into ſin*, when they can take notice of any thing in their carriage and practice unbecoming their profeſſion.

2. Halting in Religion is moſt unreaſonable. No fair pretence that can be put o[illegible]. As the Lord expoſtulates with them, *Jer.* 2. [illegible] *What iniquity have your*

your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and are walked after vanity? What a ſtrange courſe they take, who *turn aſide from God*, from the *true God*, to *walk after vanity*. The People were convinced of the folly of ſuch a courſe in *Joſh.* 24. 16. *God forbid that we ſhould forſake the Lord, to ſerve other gods*: That were a folly and madneſs indeed. God forbid we ſhould forſake our own *mercy*, our happineſs, to follow *lying vanities*. How fooliſh was the Prodigal, in leaving his Father's Houſe, to feed upon husks? When the *Galatians* were halting in Religion, how ſtrangely the Apoſtle beſpeaks them, *Gal.* 3. 1. *O fooliſh Galatians, Who hath bewitched you?* — and verſe 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh?* What, *ſo fooliſh?* q. d. none can be more fooliſh than thus. *If the Lord be not God, why do we follow Him at all?* And if He be God (as nothing more ſure) *Why do we not follow the Lord fully?* If it be not good to be truly religious, why do we make any profeſſion of it? why are we not open avowed *Atheiſts?* And if it be good indeed, Why are we no more careful to walk up to our profeſſion? Thus if we did but attend to Reaſon, it would inform us thus much, that either we ſhould quite lay down our profeſſion, or indeavour to bring up our lives to our profeſſion.

3. Halting in Religion is exceeding hurtful. As there is an expreſſion, *Jer.* 7. 6. *Neither walk after other gods to your hurt*; That ſome inſtead of cleaving to the Lord, followed *Baal-peor*, was it not to their hurt? *Deut.* 4. 3, 4. ſee *Ezek.* 6. 22. If we belong to God, and yet are halting in our courſe before Him, we may look to *ſmart* for it here; if we are turning aſide from him, He will fetch us in *with the rod*, Pſa. 89. 30, &c.

4. We have gone [illegible] halting too long already. It is more than time we [illegible]ld now ſeek for cure, that we ſhould

ſhould now mend of it. Hath not this been our manner from our youth? As *Moſes* ſaid of the Children of *Iſrael*, *Ye have been rebellious againſt the Lord from the day that I knew you.* Have not we been ſtill at this paſs, at off and on, playing faſt and looſe with God? I may here allude to that in *Joſh.* 22. 17, 18. *Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleanſed unto this day: but that we muſt turn away this day from following the Lord?* We have been too long unſteady and uneven in our courſe.

5. This halting in Religion is *hard to cure.* And the longer any ſoul goes on in it, it is ſtill ſo much the worſe. As a leg out of joynt, the longer it goes ſo, it is ſo much the more difficult to ſet it right again. Oh that this was ſeriouſly conſidered! every ſtep we take awry, we are making work for Repentance. And as it is not ſo eaſie, but exceeding painful, to have a broken leg ſet right and ſound again; ſo it is no ſuch eaſie matter to have a lapſed ſoul reſtored by Repentance.

6. If we have made any progreſs in Chriſtianity, to halt now would deprive us of the comfort of it. O what comfort is to be found in cloſe walking with God! The whole world, if you ſearch it through, has no ſuch *cordial* for a fainting, dying creature, as the ſenſe of ones integrity and former upright-walking before God. When *Hezekiah* had received the ſentence of death, this was more to him than all his Kingdom again, *Iſa.* 38. 3. On the contrary, when we are halting in our courſe, we undermine our own peace, lay a foundation for inward troubles, jealouſy of our eſtates. *John*, 8. 31. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed:* Mark it, *If ye continue* —— But otherwiſe you would only ſeem to be my Diſciples. It's not enough to begin well, but we muſt continue: And otherwiſe all that we have *done* in Religion, or

ſuffered upon this account will be loſt and in vain, *Gal.* 3. 4. And if our *goodneſs* be but as the morning cloud, and early dew, that ſoon paſſeth away, even ſuch will our *hopes* be. Our *comfort* will *hold out* and continue no longer, than we hold faſt our integrity.

7. Halting will really ſet us back, caſt us very much behind in our Chriſtian courſe. A *lame man* makes but a *bad traveller*. So halting Chriſtians *drive on very heavily* in the wayes of God. A man that is careleſs of keeping in his way, no wonder if he comes late and weary home. And if we are *oft turning into crooked paths*, how will this hinder us in the way to heaven? This is *going about* indeed; and no getting thus to heaven, but we muſt return by *weeping croſs*. Thus every ſtep we take awry, is one ſtep out of our way.

8. It is a moſt unworthy thing to halt with God. He keeps touch with his. No *God like him, that keeps Covenant with them that walk before Him with all their heart*, 1 *Kings* 8. 23. No God like him for this: All beſides Him are found *lying vanities*. It was horrible blaſphemy that meſſage which *Senacherib* ſent to *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 37. 10. *Let not thy God in whom thou truſteſt, deceive thee*. Little danger or fear of this. Never to this day, that the Lord deceived any one ſoul that truſted in him, and was faithful to him. 1 *Sam.* 10. 19. *Ye have this day rejected your God, who himſelf ſaved you out of all your adverſities, and your tribulations*. Moſt diſingenuous and ingrateful creatures! If we caſt him off now, he would not have dealt ſo with us. If we forſake him, he would not have forſaken us. With *an upright man he will ſhew himſelf upright*, Pſal. 18. 25. This motive the Apoſtle uſeth to perſwade unto Chriſtian ſtedfaſtneſs and conſtancy, *Heb.* 10. 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith without wavering; for he is faithful that hath promiſed*. God would be true to us; then ſhould not we be true to him?

9. Others

9. Others obſtinacy in their falſe and evil wayes ſhould provoke us to ſtedfaſtneſs in the wayes of God. *Jer.*2.11. How many rooted in their errors, that there is no ſtirring of them? how many wedded to Superſtition? how many doting upon their old heatheniſh cuſtoms, like thoſe, *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. no taking them off? How many hardned in ſin; ſo reſolved upon the purſuit of their luſts, as there is no turning of them? And do not all theſe ſhame and condemn us, if our hearts are not as much fixed upon God, if we cleave not as cloſe to Him, his Truth and Wayes?

10. I add but a word more. How ſhould we fear to *halt* with God, leſt it provoke the Lord even to *depart* from us. O Sirs, do you deſire it may go well with the Land, whereof you are Inhabitants, with the Church of which you are Members? would you have it to go well with *England*? then take ye heed of halting in Religion. See *Joſh.*22.18. *If we turn away from following the Lord to day, to morrow he may be wroth with the whole Congregation.* If ſuch as profeſs his Name are turning further back from him, how may ſuch *provoking of his ſons and daughters* cauſe the Lord to *abhor us!* will not this make a *way to his Anger*; or, rather make the gap wider, like a great breach of the Sea, never more to be repaired? I ſay, halting in Religion may provoke the Lord to depart. As we read of the *Iſraelites*, Pſa.78. 57, to 62. *They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully, like their fathers: they were turned aſide, like a deceitful bow. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Iſrael; ſo that he forſook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, &c.*

I come now to the Directions I promiſed, with which I conclude. And would you halt no more in Religion—— (1.) Get a *clear ſight* and knowledge of *your way.* Labour for a diſtinct knowledge both in matters of Faith and Practice. Thus get your way made

plain. He that walks in the dark, goes he knows not whither, and ſtumbles at he knows not what. He that walks in the Light, is not in that danger of ſtumbling. We muſt firſt *know*, before we can be *eſtabliſhed* in the Truth, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. Firſt *prove*, and then *hold faſt*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 21. We muſt *know the certainty* of thoſe things wherein we have been inſtructed, that they may be moſt *ſurely believed* of us, *Luke* 1. 1, 4. They that receive the Word with much aſſurance, as the believing *Theſſalonians* did, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5. there is hope that they will venture all, rather than renounce or part with the Truth. 2 *Tim.* 3. 14. *Continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned, and haſt been aſſured of.* There muſt be a learning of the Truth, and aſſurance that it is the Truth, if we would continue in the Truth. So *Col.* 1. 23.

Here 1. Be very clear in the *grounds of Religion.* They that would not be *fluctuating* in Religion, muſt get their minds *well ballaſted* with the knowledge of the grounds of Religion. They that would ſtand in a ſtorm, muſt ſee they have a *baſis* of their own, a good foundation laid, that they do not pin their Faith on others. Indeed I know not what ſhould hinder, but an *ignorant Proteſtant* may ſoon turn a *confident Papiſt.* But Catechiſm, Inſtruction in the Principles of Chriſtianity, was one main *engine*, whereby our Reformers battered down Popery. The foundation is a principal part of the building: ſo the *loweſt Principles* (as it is obſerved) the *loweſt Principles* of Religion in one ſenſe, are the *higheſt Principles.* If you would have the houſe to ſtand, lay the foundation well: an errour in the foundation is deſtructive to the building.

2. Get your minds eſtabliſhed in the preſent Truth. It concerns Chriſtians to be very clear in thoſe Truths for which they may be called to ſuffer. And *when* ye

are

are aſſured you have the Truth on your ſide, you may go on boldly, you need not fear. Let the world *ſtorm*; you have *a ſtrong City*, *Iſa.*26. 1, 2. Be eſtabliſhed I ſay, *in the preſent Truth.*

And ſo be at pains to aquaint your ſelves with your *preſent duty*. *Be wiſe concerning the times*, to know what you ought to do. While you know you are in a way of duty, let others cenſure, reproach, or perſecute you, yet what ſhould hinder but you may go on chearfully? O how comfortable a thing it is, to know, and be aſſured, that if troubles do befal me in the way I take, they overtake me in a way of duty. This greatly emboldened the Prophet *Daniel* to pray before his God, as he did *afore-time*, Dan.6.10. Come on't what will, he is ſure it was his duty to pray after that manner. While we are in way of duty, we may truſt God to bear us out. Or, if we ſuffer in his ſervice, we ſhould yet have no cauſe to complain of an hard ſervice. He that conſidered *Nebuchadrezzar*, what hazards and hardſhips he had been put upon in *ſerving His Providence*, and would not let it go unrewarded, *Ezek.* 29. 18, *&c.* much more that he conſiders his *ſuffering Servants*, who are exerciſed with many troubles here, that attend their *obſerving his Commands*, who commit themſelves to *Him* in wel-doing.

2. Get your hearts ſet right. This is another general Direction. The upright heart will hate every falſe way. But where the heart is not right, ſuch a ſoul is not ſtedfaſt with God. *Pſal.* 78. 8. —*A generation that ſet not their heart aright* (then it follows) and *whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God.* As we would not halt, as we deſire to walk in a ſtreight and even courſe, our eye muſt be ſingle.

3. Be humbled in the ſence of your former ſinful warpings. They that are pained, and afflicted in the ſen-

ſence and remembrance of their former ſinful ſlips and falls, will look better to their feet and take more heed to their wayes. When the ſoul hath experienced, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, to forſake the Lord; it will fear to turn aſide from him again. On the other hand, where men are not humbled for the irregularity of their former courſe, they will be likely to go on in the ſame courſe ſtill, *Jer.*44.10. *They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my Law.* But deep humiliation is a proper means to cure halting. We never read, that *Peter* denied Chriſt after his repentance and humiliation for that ſin: nay, how boldly doth he preach Chriſt afterwards, as you ſee, *Acts* 2. &c.

4. Walk circumſpectly. If you would not halt, obſerve every ſtep you take, take heed of falls; yea, of the leaſt ſtepping awry. Give not a little way to ſin. O fear at any time deliberately to venture upon any ſin, or on any temptation to ſin. Do not wilfully *daſh your foot upon the ſtones.* To be afraid of the leaſt ſin, to be ready to flee from temptations, is no argument of *cowardiſe* or puſillanimity of ſpirit, but a proof of *ſpiritual wiſdom*, a neceſſary piece of *Chriſtian Policy.* And the more we are *afraid of ſin*, the leſs danger of our *ſhrinking at ſufferings.* Indeed it is wiſdom, to take heed of the leaſt ſlips. When we begin to fall, none knows how far we may fall, or how long it may be ere we recover our ſelves again. The ſin is great, to account any ſin little. We ought to be ſo afraid of ſin, as not to venture on thoſe things that have *the appearance of evil*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 22.

5. Set to the mortification of thy beloved ſin eſpecially. Cut off the *right foot* that would offend thee, and cauſe thee to *ſtumble.* It is thy *beloved ſin*, that *right eye*, that *right foot*, which moſt enclines thee to halt,

halt, is the greateſt impediment to even, upright walking. He that ſets up any Idol in his heart, and puts the *ſtumbling-block of his iniquity* before his face, eſtranges and ſeparates himſelf from the Lord, *Ezek.* 14. 4, 5, 7. Covetouſneſs, the love of money, ſeems to have been *Judas* his beloved ſin, and what did this bring him to at laſt? not onely to the forſaking, but further put him upon the betraying of his Maſter. Where any darling-luſt is ſpared and indulged, there a *Barabbas* is preferred to Chriſt. This may ſeem a very hard ſaying; as it is ſharp ſervice, to mortifie ones earthly members, to pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right foot; yet it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the cure of halting: while men *favour the right foot*, they cannot but halt in their courſe. On the other hand, we ſhall then *walk uprightly* before God, when we *keep* our ſelves from our *own iniquities*, Pſal. 18. 23.

6. Set forth in Religion with a ſerious purpoſe, and fixed reſolution never to draw back. There is a force and vertue, a *vis impreſſa*, that comes from an holy reſolution here, that carries the ſoul on in a more even courſe. The *ſtronger* our *reſolutions* are (provided they be not taken up in our own ſtrength) the more *ſteady* and *uniform* will our *motion* be. Therefore *Barnabas* exhorted them, *Acts* 11. 23. that with *purpoſe of heart* they would *cleave to the Lord*; τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας there, is as much as τῇ πάσῃ καρδίᾳ. Sayes the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 106. *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgements.* So *Dan.* 1. 8. But *Daniel purpoſed that he would not defile himſelf with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.* Daniel *purpoſed*, reſolved: and this kept him free amidſt temptations to defilement that way offered. *Holy reſolution* for God, is a *ſtrong Bank*

againſt

againſt a *flood of Temptations*; is a *good Bulwark* againſt the *ſhot* and *aſſaults* of *Adverſaries*. And no taking of the *Gariſon*, till a *breach* is made here. Yea, it is to be noted, that though to ſin *againſt* clear *conviction*, doth very much aggravate ſin; yet not ſo, to ſin *beſides* ones ſerious *purpoſe* and *reſolution*. When the heart is reſolved for God, devoted to his fear, hath freely, chearfully ſworn Alleagiance to him, and yet is drawn to ſome ſin; this would rather argue weakneſs, than wilfulneſs; or the violence of temptation, rather than any eagerneſs of ſuch a ſoul to break forth in a way of tranſgreſſion. Therefore, as we read of *engaging the heart* to approach to God, (*Jer.* 30. 21.) ſo let us ſee, we engage our hearts to ſtick cloſe to God. Say not alwayes, Shal I, ſhal I? but at laſt come to this reſolve, *If the Lord be God*, to *follow him*: If this or that be the Truth, to ſtick to it: if this or that be a ſin, to avoid it, and in our places oppoſe it: If ſuch a thing be a duty, and well-pleaſing to God, to countenance and practiſe it, come on't what will.

7. Walk humbly with thy God. Be ever ſenſible of thine own weakneſs, how unable thou art to ſtand, or go alone. Take this along with the foregoing Direction. When you have reſolved on your way, yet you ought to conſider, that the way of man is not in himſelf. *It is the Lord that keepeth the feet of his Saints*, 1 Sam. 2. 9. A proud creature, one that is *lifted up* in his own conceits, is *near a fall*. *Uzziah's* heart was lifted up to his deſtruction, *Hab.* 2. 4. *Behold, his ſoul which is lifted up, is not upright in him.* While he would ſeem ſome *great Mountain*, he is a meer *empty bubble*, that *cracks* and *breaks* and *vaniſheth into air*. We reade of ſome of the Martyrs, that when they ſaw the ſtorm coming, were very jealous of themſelves, that they ſhould never

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never be able to endure the brunt, that they ſhould never hold out; who yet ſtood unmoved in the evil day. Again, others there were as full of ſelf-confidence (as the former were of ſelf-ſuſpition) who *triumphed before the victory*, or fight, that in the day of tryal ſoon turned back and *forſook their colours*. Some that boaſted very much before they put on their Armour, who put it off with ſhame. We may ſay of this ſin of Pride, *It hath caſt down many wounded; yea, many ſtrong ones have fallen by it.*

8. Set the Lord ever before you, as the Pſalmiſt did, *Pſal.* 16. 8. *The Lord before whom I walk*, ſayes *Abraham*, *Gen.* 24. 40. See *Gen.* 48. 15. And particularly eye, and get clear apprehenſions of theſe Attributes of God, &c.

(1.) His Alſufficiency. *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am God Alſufficient, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, or *upright*. If you ſhould meet with enemies, with oppoſition in a way of upright walking; yet know God is Almighty to defend you. If you ſhould be put upon ſtraits, or ſuſtain great loſſes here, God is alſufficient to ſupply your wants, repair your loſſes, and every way to beſtead you.

(2.) His unchangableneſs. *Mal.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not*. However men may vary from what they have formerly profeſſed: He is ſtill the ſame. However the times may change, the Lord changes not. And ſo *the Truth* is as dear to him, *integrity* and conſtancy in his Servants are of the ſame value and account with him, as ever they were.

(3.) His faithfulneſs. *He* is the Faithful God, that keepeth Covenant, that forſaketh not his Saints, unto whom we may moſt ſafely commit our ſelves in well-doing, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. And theſe Divine Attributes preſented to the ſoul, would increaſe *Spirits*, very much

much encourage us to close and even walking with God. *Moses* endured, as seeing him who is invisible. And had we such a sight of God, did we see him to be an alsufficient, unchangable, faithful God, it would help us to hold out, to follow him fully.

(4.) Again, eye *His* Omniscience. *His eyes are upon the wayes of man*, and *He seeth all his goings*, Job, 34. 21. *He telleth all our wanderings*. When *Peter* was turning his back on Christ, his Lord and Master looked on him all the while. As he beheld guile-less *Nathaniel* under the Fig-tree: So he likewise beheld *Peter* halting in the High Priests Palace.

(5.) His Omnipresence. O that we had *Moses* eyes to see him that is invisible. Doubtless he is not far from any of us. No fleeing from his presence, *Psa.* 139. 7. *&c.* That we cannot sin, but in the face of our Judge. What? are ~~ye~~ we not afraid to turn aside from God, his Truth, his Commands, while the Lord himself stands by, and observes all our carriage?

(6.) His Holiness, Justice, and Severity against sin. If any draw back, his soul can take no pleasure in that man. Only *such as are upright in the Way*, that *are his delight*, Pro. 11. 20. As God is displeased at mens halting before him, so he is ready to manifest his displeasure. And what a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God, even as to fall into a consuming fire! Such of God's Attributes, as these last mentioned, would very much awe us, make us fear to depart, or turn aside in the least from him. But so much of the eighth Direction.

9. Look to Jesus as your best guide: And strive to follow his steps. Observe how Christ carried in this world. He did no sin, *neither was guile found in His mouth*. His *love* to man without *dissimulation*. His

zeal

zeal for God, free from the leaſt mixture of *ſelf-ſeeking*. He had the *wiſdom* of the *Serpent*, and the *Doves innocency* moſt exactly contempered, duly proportioned in him. He knew how to converſe with ſinners, without the leaſt communicating in their ſins. He was one and the ſame in all places, at all times. Far from ſtudying a compliance with a corrupt and ſinful generation; rather he made it his work to do all that might be, to change and amend it, to ſet a *crooked generation* ſtreight. He was ever more careful to diſcharge *duty*, than to provide for his own *ſafety* here. In doing the work, his Father ſent him about into the world, he wav'd and ſet aſide ſelf-reſpect, (*John* 5. 30. & 8. 49, 50.) The Truth and Honour of God was dearer to him, than his own life. O Chriſtians follow this your Guide. If we are Chriſtians, we ought to walk, as Chriſt alſo walked, 1 *John* 2. 6. We are unworthy of the name of Chriſtians, if it be not our care and indeavour to follow Chriſt. Now wherein we are *followers of Chriſt*, we may be confident we *go right*; ſo far we halt not in our courſe. Therefore obſerve and eye Chriſt more. Conſider how he carried upon earth. And where you are at a ſtand, think (if you can) how Chriſt would have carried, what he would have done in the like caſe with yours.

10. Reckon upon troubles in this world. Expect to meet with croſſes in your Chriſtian courſe. As *Paul* and *Barnabas* confirmed the ſouls of the Diſciples, and exhorted them to *continue in the Faith, and that through much tribulation we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God*, Acts 14. 22. When we look to *meet with the Croſs* in our way, we ſhall not ſo ſoon *ſtumble* at it. On the contrary, the Diſciples were offended at Chriſts paſſion, and ſhrunk away from him, being in a great meaſure ſurprized with it: (for, as many fair warnings,

warnings, and expreſs *items* as they had from our Saviour to prepare for his ſufferings; yet they would not let thoſe ſayings ſink down into their hearts) ſtill their thoughts were upon Chriſts reigning here as an earthly King, and on ſome great worldly advancement, which they expected under Chriſt.

11. Be going forward. *The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright.* Though I do not determine this to be the ſenſe of the place; yet it is a truth, if we take it thus, The further we go on in the ways of God, the more ſtrength we ſhall find to hold out, and continue in them. *The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright. The Righteous ſhall hold on his way, and wax ſtronger, and ſtronger.* Here they that *run faſteſt*, are *leaſt weary*. Whereas if we *ſit ſtill*, we ſhall ſoon grow *lame* and *ſtark*. O take heed of ſtanding ſtill! Be going forward. Grow in Grace. Let it be your care *to grow in Grace*, as you fear to *fall from your own ſteadfaſtneſs*. Weaklings are apteſt to ſtumble and fall. Therefore let us be going on from ſtrength to ſtrength. It is a good thing indeed, that *the heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace* (Heb. 13.9.) Where note, it is one property of Grace to eſtabliſh the heart: And the more Grace, the more inward eſtabliſhment. *Adde to Faith, Vertue* —— (ſayes the Apoſtle *Peter*) *Let theſe things be in you, and abound* —— *And if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall*, 2 Pet. 1.

Here I might inſtance in ſundry particular Graces, that you ſhould be growing in eſpecially. You heard before what corruptions eſpecially, and moſt frequently, are a cauſe of halting: Now ſtrengthen thoſe Graces that are oppoſite thereunto. Labour to increaſe, and excel in Faith. *By Faith Enoch walked with God. By Faith Moſes choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin.*

In

In ſincerity. Being really what we ſeem to be. The more truth in our inward parts, the more Evenneſs and Uniformity in our outward Converſations.

In ſelf-denial. They that would follow God fully, as *Moſes* did, muſt deny themſelves, as he did; who *refuſed to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter*, that he might be found the faithful Servant of God.

In an holy contempt of the world. Labour to ſit looſer in your affections to the world, if you would ſtick cloſe to God. *Demas* falling in love with this preſent world, and affecting its embraces, ſhook off holy *Paul* once, and (as ſome tell us) turned Prieſt afterwards in an Idols temple. Though others ſuppoſe he fell not ſo far, but ſoon recovered again. However, the danger was very great, ſee 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. Many alas, ſtick faſt in the world, *ſtick faſt here*, ſo that they know not how to take a ſtep, how to ſet a foot forward in the way to Heaven.

In love to God, his Truth, and Wayes. This would cauſe you to cleave to him.

In Patience. We have great need of Patience too, that we be not wearied, nor faint in our minds. We muſt *run with patience the race ſet before us*. Without patience, we ſhould ſoon be *run out of breath*.

12. Lean ever upon Chriſt. As you would not halt in your courſe, lean hard upon Chriſt. While we deſire to grow in Grace, yet we ſhould fear to truſt to Grace received. It was the cauſe of *Peters* foul and ſhameful fall, his ſelf confidence, conceiting that he was ſtrong enough now to ſtand alone. A Chriſtian is ſtronger in the *Grace that is in Chriſt*, than in the greateſt meaſure of grace inherent, and derived from him. Our *Ciſterns* would ſoon fail, were they not fed with an *Everlaſting Spring*. Reſt not in what you have re-

ceived, but be continualy going out to Christ for more. It is not enough that his Grace and Spirit hath once entered into us, to set us on our *feet*; but he must also take us by the hand. There is a promise, *Zech.* 10. 12. *I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the Lord.* And as the little Child soon falls, if it holds not by its Nurse, or by its Father: so we have met with many a knock, many a fall, many a slip, and strain, by letting go our hold of Jesus Christ. A Believer never walks safely but in the hand of Christ, or leaning on his arm.

13. Get under the sense of God's love, *to walk in the Light of his Countenance*, as it is *Psal.* 89. 15. *The joy of the Lord would be your strength.* This would make His Wayes *Paths of pleasantness.* Did we but see all fair and clear over head, how might it encourage us to go on in our Christian course, though it should be a little foul under foot? Yea, if the Lord had once cast his mantle, had cast a skirt of Love over us, this would engage us to follow him; we could not chuse then but follow hard after Him. If enemies rise up against us, though a multitude of dangers, and outward evils should surround us; yet we should not be dismaied, but think our selves safe enough under the *Banner of His Love.* We might more quietly repose our selves under the *Banner of his Love*, than under the protection of an *Army with Banners.* It is something to have *a sense of the Truth* of Religion: but more, to have *experience of the Goodness* thereof. How hardly should any perswade or draw us contrary to our own experience? should we not resolutely stick to, continue and persevere in those wayes, wherein we have met with God, and have many times been delighted, ravished with his presence?

14. Be much in the duty of self-examination. Be frequent

frequent in that noble, ſpiritual act of ſelf-reflection. Often ask your hearts this queſtion, Whether they are in the way or no? and how uprightly they carry in it? One that hath a jealouſie, a ſuſpition of his ſervant, would not let him go long, without calling him to a reckoning. Our hearts are very wily, and deceitful, we had need every day take account of them, as *Achiſh* of *David*, [*Whither have ye made a rode to day?*] Though we ſhould fear being deluded by them, as *Achiſh* was by him. Without often reckoning with, without a ſerious and ſtrict examination of our hearts, we ſhall never keep them true to God, or our ſelves.

15. Deſire others of the Faithful to watch over you, to admoniſh you, and tell you of it, when at any time they ſee you ſtarting aſide. *Let the Righteous ſmite me.* Entreat thoſe your fellow-travellers to put forth their *helping hand*, when they ſee you ſlipping and ready to fall.

16. Laſtly, Let this be your earneſt ſuit daily unto God, that he would hold up your goings, that your footſteps ſlip not. As the Pſalmiſt prayes, *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path.* He muſt not only ſhew us our way, but alſo lead us on in it. So again, *Pſal.* 143. 8, 10. Let us be earneſt with God here, As the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 63. 8. *My ſoul followeth hard after thee*: (and mark what follows) *thy right hand upholdeth me.* And here let us plead that Branch and Article of His Gracious Covenant, where he promiſeth, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. 32. 40. The Lord is faithful to eſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the preſence of His Glory with exceeding joy; To the only wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, now and ever*, Amen.

SERMON V.

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Ephes. 6. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

I Shall look no further back to the precedent verses, than may give light to the present Text.

Ver. 21. The Apostle drawing to a conclusion of this Epistle, giveth an honourable Testimony of *Tychicus*, one dear to him, and faithful in his Ministry, shewing the causes moving him to send him to them.

1. That by him they might know the state of his affairs, how it went with him.

2. That he might minister comfort to their hearts.

Ver. 23. contains his *Valediction* to his *beloved Ephesians*, in which he desires all health and happiness for them: *Peace be to the Brethren.*

In which words we may consider,

1. What he desires; *Peace*, *Faith* and *Love*.

By *Peace* some understand, according to the Hebrew phrase of the Old Testament, *Salutem & felicitatem*, all kind of good. Others, more suitable to the New Testament phrase, understand *Peace of Conscience*, acceptation of our persons, and reconciliation to God in Christ, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

By *Faith* and *Love*, he means the increase of those Graces.

Pacem ac felicitatem fratribus omnibus exopto una cum Charitatis & Fidei incremento, &c. as one paraphraseth on the place.

2. For whom he desireth these things, *to the Brethren*,

thren, that is, the Faithful in Christ, whether Ministers or others, who are sometimes distinguished from private Christians, *Acts* 15. 23. *The Apostles, Elders, and Brethren.* But here we may take them joyntly: For at *Ephesus* were many Ministers, *Acts* 20. 17. Ministers and private Christians are all Brethren in Christ, *Gal.* 3. 28.

Paul, though not inferiour to the chief of the Apostles, is not ashamed to own Christians of the lowest form for his Brethren. *Philem.* 16. he calls *Onesimus* a *servant*, a *brother*, *beloved*. Faith, by which Believers are united to Christ, is a like precious in the highest Apostle, and the lowest Christian, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To them that have obtained like precious Faith with us.*

Nay Christ himself disdains not to call his poorest members *Brethren*, *Heb.* 2. 11.

3. From whom he desires these Graces, *from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*; even from the Fountain of all Grace, which is God the Father, as the first cause; and Jesus Christ, as the second cause, as he is Mediator between God and man, by and through whom the Father is wont to dispense to us all things necessary to Salvation, all things pertaining to life and godliness.

As all the plenty of *Egypt* passed through the hands of *Joseph*, Gen. 41. 55. *Go to Joseph, what he saith to you, do*, said *Pharoah* to the People when they cryed to him for corn. So if any man lack Wisdom, Love, Faith, let him go to God the Father by Christ, *Heb.* 13. 15. *By him, &c.*

The Text is a reduplication of this *Votum Apostolicum*, for so some reade it, *Gratia, inquam, adsit omnibus, &c.*

In words it is more contracted, but in sense more comprehensive than the former verse; thus, *I wish*

Peace, Love, Faith to the Brethren; yea Grace, all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings to you, and all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.

By *Grace* he meaneth *omnimodam Gratiam*, all ſorts of Grace; having mentioned already *Peace*, *Love* and *Faith*, which are excellent graces, yet are they not *all Grace*; therefore he adds Grace, that he may take his leave of theſe his beloved Brethren, in the ſame manner as he reſolved to come to others, *Rom.* 15.29. —*In the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

In the Text are two principal parts.

1. A Character of a right Chriſtian, a Chriſtian indeed, as Chriſt ſaid of *Nathaniel*, *Behold an Iſraelite indeed*; he is one that loveth our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in *ſincerity*. For the Apoſtle wiſheth not ſo great good to all that pretend love to Chriſt, to Hypocrites, but to ſuch as *love him unfeignedly*.

2. The ſubject matter of his wiſh, what it is he deſireth for ſincere lovers of Chriſt, it is *Grace*: Not outward good things, as health, long-life, riches, honour, though he excludeth not them; nay, Peace in the largeſt ſenſe may include them, and *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and that which is to come.* But the Apoſtle willing to give them a brief *Epitome* of his large heart, and good wiſhes for them, doth it in this one word, *Grace*, as not knowing any better thing for them.

Doct. 1. *Jeſus Chriſt is our Lord.* He is Lord of all, *Acts* 10. 36. but eſpecially he is Lord of his Church, which is his houſe, *Heb.* 3.6. 1. He built the houſe; it is He that made us, not we our ſelves. 2. He hath moreover bought us, *Acts* 20.28. the Church which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. 3. *Him hath God the Father exalted to be a Prince*, &c. *Acts* 5. 31. and *Phil.* 2.9. *Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him*, &c.

Uſe.

Uſe. Let all things in the Church be regulated according to the Inſtitutions of our Lord Chriſt. Let Miniſters, who are Stewards over the Houſe of God, be wiſe and faithful, to preach no other Doctrine, adminiſter no other Sacraments, exerciſe no other Diſcipline, introduce no other Rites into Divine Worſhip than what they have good warrant for from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and can ſay with the Apoſtle, 1*Cor.* 11. 23. *I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.*

2. Let all that profeſs hope of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, receive him for their Lord to rule over them, as well as for their Saviour to redeem them. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? Luke* 6. 46. So we profeſs in our Creed, *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:* and ſo in the cloſe of our prayers, —*through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* So let it appear in our Lives and Goſpel-becoming-converſations.

But this I paſs over.

There are two Doctrines ariſing from the two ſeveral parts of the Text, which I am to inſiſt upon.

And as I am to preach this day, not knowing whether I ſhall ever have the liberty to preach again; ſo I would have you to hear, as not ſure whether you may ever hear again.

Doct. 1. *It is the character of a right Chriſtian, to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.*

2. *The Apoſtle wiſheth Grace to all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, as the beſt thing he could wiſh them.*

1. Of the firſt; *It is the character of a right Chriſtian to love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.*

Qu. To love Chriſt in ſincerity, what is that? ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, according to the letter of the Original, is as much as to ſay, as *in incorruption.* So reade the *Interlin.* and *vulgar.*

Jesus Christ the Incorruptible God. So reads the *Ethiopick.*

Arab. Amore non vitiato, neque culpato, that love Christ with a love not faulty nor blame-worthy; which agrees best with the sense of Interpreters, who render ἐν ἀφθαρσία by ἀφθαρτῶς *incorruptly, sincerely, not feignedly.* It being the Apostles purpose by this phrase to exclude all rotten Hypocrites from the benefits he wisheth to good Christians.

Ubi notandum est hoc Apostolicum votum non in sceleratis hypocritis, sed in sinceris tantum Christi Discipulis, qui viz. Christum incorrupto animo diligunt, locum habere. Vorstius.

More particularly. To love Christ in sincerity, is the act or affection of a gracious heart, whereby, knowing the excellency and worth of Christ, he desires union with him, preferreth him, communion with him, and obedience to his Commandments before all things in the world.

1. What it is to love Christ. 2. In sincerity.

1. Love of Christ implieth knowledge of him, of his Worthiness and high Deserts. Right Love is no blind affection, but ariseth from Light and Understanding of the loveliness of the Object upon which it is placed, and to which it is carried forth. *Cant.* 5. 10. The Church describing at large the Excellencies of Christ, whom *her soul loveth*, concludes, ver. 16. *He is* ὅλως ἐπιθυμία, *altogether lovely*, or *desirable.*

2. From knowledge of the worth that is in Christ, springeth desire of union and communion with him. A man desires to be near his Friend in whom he delighteth, loveth his company, converseth with him. Cant. 2. 3. *I sate down under his shadow with great delight.* Psal. 86. 11. *Unite my heart. David* desired to dwell in the House of God for ever, because he loved him.

him, *Pſal.* 23. *ult.* The wiſe Merchant buyeth, gets into his poſſeſſion the Pearl which he prized, *Matth.* 13. 46.

3. Hence followeth an high eſteem of Chriſt, ſo as he preferreth him to all other things whatſoever. He ſeeth no beauty, excellency comparable to his. *Cant.* 5. 10. *The chiefeſt of ten thouſand.* Pſal. 63. 1. *My ſoul thirſteth for thee.*

4. Laſtly, The loving ſoul is moſt obedient. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. The love of Chriſt conſtraineth him ſo, as he thinketh nothing too hard to do or ſuffer, nothing too dear to part with for Chriſts ſake. *Amanti nihil durum.*

2. What it is to love Chriſt in ſincerity.

1. It is to love him with the whole heart, according to the utmoſt extent of that phraſe, *Mat.* 22. 37. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, &c. Iſa.* 26. 8. *The deſire of our ſoul is unto thee.* This is to love without diſſimulation, *Rom.* 12. 9. To love, not in word and in tongue, but *in deed* and *in truth.* 1 *John* 3. 18. Where love is ſincere, there is *idem velle & nolle*, as if two hearts were in one body. We love Chriſt ſincerely, or with all the heart, when his will is ours, our will is conformable to his; when his Laws are ſo written in our hearts, that we are wholly his to be commanded; as men ſubſcribe their Letters to their friends, *Yours to be commanded.*

2. It is to love him more than all other things, to love him with a tranſcendant love. *John* 21. 15. *Loveſt thou me more than theſe? πλέον τυτων*, more than theſe *Nets*, *Gain*, *Profits*, *Pleaſures*, *Credit*, or *Life* it ſelf? or more than theſe perſons thy fellow-*Diſciples? Luke* 14. 26. If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and ſiſters, yea and his own life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple. So *Mat.* 4. 20, 22. The Diſciples left their Father,

Father, Nets, Ships, they forſook all to follow Chriſt. *Abraham* forſook his Country and his Father's houſe, in obedience to God's Call. *Acts* 19. 19. Thoſe Converts forſook their Gain and their gainful Trades, for Chriſt and the Goſpel.

3. It is to love whole Chriſt. Chriſt in all his Offices, to love him as our Prophet, to ſubmit to his inſtruction, *Acts*, 3. 23. *every ſoul that will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from amongſt the People*: It is to love him as our King, to ſubmit to his Government, to be ruled by his Laws, to live according to his Goſpel, to ſuffer no other Lord beſides him, *to have Dominion over us. Luke* 19. 27. *Thoſe mine enemies which would not that I ſhould Reign over them, &c.* It is to love him as our Sanctification, to be as willing to ſaved from our ſins, as from Hell. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *Chriſt is made of God to us, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, &c.*

4. To love him for himſelf, and not only for his benefits. This is love of complacency, love of delight, when we love Chriſt, as the Apoſtles, and the good Women, who loved him in diſgrace, in his poverty, that miniſtred to him of their ſubſtance, *Luke* 8. 3. who followed him naked, ſtripped, condemned, hanging on the Croſs, *Luke* 22. 33. *Lord I am ready to go with thee into priſon, to death.*

That is, *Amor concupiſcentiæ.* Love of our ſelves, when we love him only for gaine, for what he brings along with him, as the People, *John* 6. 26. who *followed him for the loaves, who would needs have made him King when he fed ſo many thouſands with a few loaves*; they thought him a fit man to victual a camp, to maintain an Army with light charge, to deliver them from their ſubjection to the *Romane Empire.* This is not ſincere love, ſuch love is not laſting; when the hope of gain and advantage is gone, this love will be gone.

Now

Now follow the Reaſons of the Point.

1. *It is the character of a right Chriſtian to love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.* Becauſe he is altogether lovely. In him concurre what ever is requiſit to the object of love. As, 1. Goodneſs is lovely, *Non amatur certe niſi bonum, &c.* What ever we love, we look upon it as good. It either is ſo indeed, or it appears ſo to us. *Jonathan* upon this account loved *David* for his Vertue, his Valour. *Prov.* 24. 26. *Every man ſhall kiſs his lips that giveth a right anſwer.* Wiſdome, Learning, Ingenuity, and ſuch like graces, procure Love, *Mark* 10. 21. *Jeſus beholding him, loved him for his ingenuity.* Therefore Saints love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for he is good, goodneſs it ſelf, *Pſal.* 45. 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips, Cant.* 1. 3. *Therefore do the Virgins love thee.* There is none good but God, and Jeſus Chriſt, he is eminently good, infinitely good; he received not the Spirit of Grace by meaſure, but, *in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the God-head bodily.* He is the Fountain of all goodneſs; the good in the creature is derived from his goodneſs, a drop of his Ocean, a beam from the Sun of Righteouſneſs; of his fulneſs we all receive.

2. *Beauty is amiable, therefore Jacob loved Rachel: Ahaſuerus loved Eſther.* Upon this account Jeſus Chriſt is moſt lovely, *who is the brightneſs of his Fathers Glory, the expreſs Image of his Perſon*, Heb. 1. 3. Though carnal eyes ſee not his beauty, *Iſa.* 53. 2, 3. *He hath no form nor comelineſs: and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him.* But the Faithful who looked on him with ſpiritual eyes, beheld his Glory: *The Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*, John 1. 14.

3. *Similitude, likeneſs of nature and manners procureth love, except it be by accident, as a proud perſon hateth one*

one that is as proud as himself : and ſo doth one of the ſame calling, envy another of the ſame profeſſion, *Non in quantum eſt ſimilis ſed in quantum eſt proprii boni impeditivus*, as *Aquinas* gives the reaſon. Now in this reſpect, Jeſus Chriſt hath highly merited a Chriſtians love, becauſe he took on him humane nature, and became like to us in all things, ſave ſin, *Heb* 2. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.* *Noah* by falling into ſin, fell into ſhame, and lay uncovered in his tent, to the deriſion of his ungracious ſon *Ham*: *Sem* and *Japhet*, his better-natured ſons, *took a garment and* [for grief] *went backward*, not enduring to look upon their *Fathers nakedneſs*. Our *Firſt Parents* by *diſobedience* expoſed themſelves to ſhame and deriſion, and all their Poſterity to ruine remedileſs, had not the Lord Jeſus gone backward, that is, from Heaven to earth, and ſo covered poor man with his skirt, leſt the ſhame of our nakedneſs ſhould appear. There is a Law, *Lev.* 25. 25. *If thy brother be poor, &c.* Our Father *Adam* was ſeized on a fair Poſſeſſion, but he ſold it for no valuable conſideration, he was never able to redeem it, nor any of his kin: for it coſt more to redeem a ſoul. The good Angels, though as friends they might commiſerate loſt man, yet were they not able to recover for him his forfeited inheritance, Gods Favour and Eternal Happineſs; and if they had been able, yet by Law they might not do it, being not in a capacity, becauſe they were no kin to man. The Son of God therefore being able to do this unſpeakable kindneſs for fallen man, as being God bleſſed for ever, mighty to ſave, took on him our fleſh, that he might be of kin to us, and ſo by right in Law redeem that poſſeſſion which our Father ſold. O therefore love the Lord, all ye his Saints. For,

4. He

4. He hath loved us. *Magnes amoris amor*, Love begetteth love. We love him becauſe he loved us firſt, 1 *John* 4. 10. Lord, he is worthy, *Luke* 7. 5. much more is Chriſt worthy, *For he loveth our Nation.* Gal. 2. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* The tongue of men and Angels is not able to ſet forth the height and length, depth and breadth, of the *Love* of God in *Chriſt. God ſo loved the World*, &c. Rev. 1. 5. To Him that loved us, and waſhed away our ſins in his own Blood, be Glory and Love, Service, *&c.*

I purpoſely ſpare to add more Reaſons of the point, it being of it ſelf ſo agreeable to reaſon, and a thing confeſſed by all Chriſtians.

Uſe 1. *Of Inſtruction.* If ſincere Love to Chriſt be a diſtinguiſhing character of a right Chriſtian, then ſurely there be but few right Chriſtians; for there be few that love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.

1. There be many complemental lovers of Chriſt, that ſay, They love him withal their heart; as the *Papiſts*, who wear his Picture, and bow to a Crucifix, yet crucifie him afreſh in his Saints; the ſuperſtitious perſons, who cringe and make low courteſie at the rehearſing of the ſyllables of the Name [*Jeſus*;] yet, do they not blaſpheme that worthy Name by their unchriſtian practices? Do they not take his Name in vain whilſt they ſeem to ſhew reverence to his Name? Did the *Jews* honour *Abraham* really, to whoſe memory they pretended much reſpect? *We have Abraham to our Father*, ſay they, *we be Abrahams Seed*, Joh. 8. 33. To whom our Saviour anſwers, ver. 39. *If ye were Abrahams Children, ye would do the Works of Abraham.* If theſe men loved Chriſt with all the heart, they would not hate whom he loves darely, nor perſecute his faithful Members, nor take his Name in vain. *How canſt thou ſay, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?*

me? ſaid *Dalilah* to *Sampſon*. Pſal. 78. 36. *They did flatter with their mouths, and lyed unto him with their tongues.*

2. There are that love Chriſt, but not with a tranſcendent Love; they love Him a little, but the world much more; 2 Tim. 3. 4. *Lovers of Pleaſures more than lovers of God.* Joh. 12. 43. *They loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.* Can that man be ſaid to love his wife with a conjugal Love, that loveth another woman above her? Can thoſe be ſaid to love Chriſt ſincerely, that love themſelves or their luſts, and prefer them before Chriſts Commands, that make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill its luſts? contrary to *Rom.* 13. *ult.* Do they love Chriſt or filthy lucre, who laugh in their ſleeves, and applaud themſelves in their covetous practices, whilſt the Miniſter is preaching againſt ~~his~~ their covetouſneſs. Luke 16. 14. *The Phariſees, who were covetous, heard theſe things, and they derided him.* Do they love Chriſt or money better, who are ſo void of charity, that though they ſee a Brother or Siſter naked, or deſtitute of daily food, yet will neither fill them, nor warm them, nor give thoſe things which are needful to the body, but hide themſelves from their own fleſh? Chriſt will one day confute their fond pretences of love to himſelf, to be meer ſelf-deluſion, when they ſhall hear from the mouth of Him, the Judge, *Depart*, &c. *for I was hungry, and ye fed me not*, &c.

3. There are Chriſtians that love Chriſt as a Saviour, but not as a Prophet; as a Prieſt, but not as a King. Do theſe love him in ſincerity? Is Chriſt divided? Did the Harlot love the Child with the love of a Mother, who would have had it divided? *Solomon* was wiſe enough to diſcern ſhe was not the true Mother, that had not the bowels of a mother. And

the

the Lord Christ, who is greater than *Solomon*, *whose eyes are as a flame of fire*, Rev. 1. 18. Who tryeth the reins and heart, will easily perceive that man is no lover of Christ in deed and truth, whatever he may affirm in word and tongue, who divideth between Salvation and Sanctification, who oppoſeth one of Chriſt's Offices to another; who refuſeth to take Chriſt's Yoak upon him, will not ſtoop to the Scepter of his Rule and Government, thongh 'tis a Golden Scepter of Grace, and his Yoak is eaſie, and his Commandments are not grievous. Chriſt came to ſet us an example, *That we ſhould walk in his ſteps*; he came not only to ſuffer and dye for our ſins, but to rule over us, to take upon him the Government of his Church, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *He ſhall reign over the Houſe of Jacob for ever*, Luke 1. 33. The Goſpel is his Royal Law, *Jam.* 2. 8. which he eſtabliſheth in his Kingdom, and to which he expecteth a conformity in all his Subjects. The *Turks* own *Mahomet's* Law for their Rule, and live up to it.

The *Jews* receive *Moſes* Doctrine, and live exactly according to the letter of it, and the ſence they have of it. And how can thoſe Chriſtians be ſaid to love Jeſus Chriſt ſincerely, who profeſs to receive his Doctrine as a Rule, but walk contrary to it?

4. There are Chriſtians who love Chriſt not for himſelf, but for ſomething elſe: Some follow him in hope of gain, as *Judas*, *Demas*, like thoſe mungrel people that went along with Iſrael out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* 12. 38. which were the firſt that fainted, and ſet them on murmuring and luſting, *Numb.* 11. 4. Some followed Chriſt for the Miracles they ſaw him work, and profeſſed to believe, *John* 2. 24. but he did not commit himſelf to them, becauſe he knew their hearts were not right with him. Some followed him, *Joh.* 6. 66. but took offence at his Doctrine, and ſo went away.

away. Who ever follow Chriſt for by-ends, love him not in ſincerity, not for himſelf; but as boyes and idle perſons love many holidayes, not for Holineſs ſake, or Saints ſake, but for playes ſake: So theſe love Chriſt, for commodity ſake, or credit ſake; which reſpects, when they faile, there is an end of ſuch love.

Uſe 2. The principal Uſe of this Doctrine, had need be for tryal. Let every one that nameth the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, prove the ſincerity of his Love. Give me leave to perſwade you, my Beloved, as to try your Faith in, ſo your Love to Jeſus Chriſt: Gal. 6. 4. *Let every one prove his own work, ſo ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf*, &c.

1. Chriſt will not take good words, a fair profeſſion of friendſhip for ſincere Love. *He tryeth reins and heart.* Rev. 2. 23. *His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the Children of men: Metaph a palpebris preſſis*, From them that preſs down their eye-lids, that they may look wiſhly, narrowly. He will weigh our Love in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and quickly eſpie if it be too light; He can diſtinguiſh between flattery and ſincere love.

2. Many pretenders there are in the world, but few unfeigned lovers of Chriſt. Mat. 25. 44. *Lord when ſaw we thee an hungry?* &c. Lord we have been in thy Name Baptized, we have worn thy Livery, we have heard many a Sermon, we have been oft feaſted at thy Table, as *Luke* 13. 27. yet the anſwer is ſad, *I tell you I know not whence you are, depart from me*, &c. Had theſe loved the Lord with an unfeigned Love, they had not received ſo harſh a doom, which they might eaſily have underſtood, had they in time taken a tryal of their Love.

3. Our hearts are alſo falſe and deceitful in this very

very point of love to Christ. *Peter* was as confident of his sincere love to Christ as we can be: though all men should deny, yet he would dye first, yet ye know what proof he made. Insomuch that afterwards, *John* 21. 15. when our Saviour put to him this question, *Lovest thou me more then these?* he being taught more modesty by the woful experience of his false heart, answers not to the degree of love, but only that he loved Christ.

4. It is possible that many of us Christians may hate Christ as much as we do the memory of those *Jews* that crucified him, albeit we be strongly perswaded, that if we were called to formal trial, we would rather dye than openly deny him or his Gospel: Do we from our hearts detest the mention of *Annas*, *Caiaphas*, *Judas* and that rabble which conspired the death of the Lord of life? In like manner did those *Jews* abhor the memory of *Korah*, *Dathan*, *Abiram* and the rest of those that rebelled against *Moses*. Do our spirits rise in indignation against them that stoned *Stephen*, persecuted the Apostles, forbiding them to Preach to the *Gentiles* that they might be saved, 1 *Thes.* 2. 16. With no less displeasure were they moved against the memory of *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, and those, though their own Princes, who slew the Lord's Prophets, *Matt.* 23. 30. *If we had been in the dayes of our Fathers, &c.* The name of *Abraham* they had in high esteem, he being the prime person of their Progenitors, with whom God Almighty made that glorious Covenant, wherein they had the priviledges of the First-Born. The memory of *Moses* was amongst them very precious, with whom God was pleased to talk face to face, who received the lively Oracles to give unto them, *Acts* 7. 38. To have upbraided the softest spirit in that Rebellious people with treachery or disloyalty against the

Messias, when he should be revealed, would as much have moved his choler, as to tell some forward professor amongst us, he would betray his Lord, were he now on the earth, for half the money that *Judas* did: yet these men brake first in their love to *Abraham*, so our Saviour telleth them, *John* 8. 39. then in their fidelity to *Moses*, *John* 5. 45, 46. and the Prophets, *Matt.* 23. 35. No marvel then if they took offence at our Saviours life, his carriage and conversation amongst them, and afforded him such entertainment as they did. Let not then Hypocrisie deceive us, by suggesting these or the like suppositions (they are the words of *Dr. Jackson*) if we should be urged by the *Turk* or *Jew* to deny him, we would sooner dy the death he did, then do it, or were he present in person to exhort us to such duties as his Messengers enjoyn us, we should sure be as forward as any man living to do them; these or the like imaginations do but foretoken our need of that apology, and argue our inclination to use it, though alas, it cannot stead any in that day of tryal, *Lord when saw we thee naked, or an hungred?* When in the Pulpit or preaching in our streets, deterring us from evil and exhorting us unto good?

Much more to this purpose, see in *Dr. Jackson* of Justifying Faith.

That we may not therefore deceive our selves with vain pretences of love, let us try the sincerity of it, and weigh it in the ballance of the Sanctuary.

Notes of sincere love to Christ.

1. The first shall be that which you have in, *Psal.* 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.* Lovers have enemies and friends in common, *Gen.* 12. 3. *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.* God will be a *Friend* to *Abrahams* friends, an *Enemy* to

to his enemies. Who love Chriſt unfeignedly hate ſin which he hateth, *Rev.* 2. 6. Sin is evil, the greateſt of evils, *The work of the Devil, which Chriſt came into the world purpoſely to deſtroy*, 1 John, 3. 8. If thou art a friend to ſin, any way of wickedneſs; If thou love ignorance, ſuperſtition; *If thou love a falſe oath*, Zech. 8. 17. *If thou love flaggons of wine*, Hoſ. 3. 1. *If thou delighteſt in ſcorning*, Prov. 1. 22. *if thou make a mock at ſin*, Prov. 14. 9. If thou hate knowledge, deſpiſe duty, ſcoff and ſcorn at Holineſs, which Chriſt commandeth, thou loveſt him not. If thou regard iniquity in thy own heart, if thou allow of it in thy children, thy friends, if thou plead for ſin, undertake the patronage and defence of it, thou proclameſt thy enmity and hoſtility to Jeſus Chriſt: But if thou hate and abhor the way of lying, *Pſal.* 119. 163. *If thou hate every evil way* (*Pſal.* 119. 128.) in thy ſelf firſt, then in others; as he that hates a *Toad*, hates it moſt in his own boſome, as ſaith *D. Sibbs*: if thy hatred of it be univerſal againſt the whole kind; if thy hatred be rooted irreconcilable, ſo as there is no appeaſing of it, but by the crucifying and aboliſhing of thy hated corruptions; this is right hatred of ſin, which argueth thy converſion to be ſound, and thy ſelf an unfeigned lover of Jeſus Chriſt.

Note 2. *Who love Chriſt in ſincerity, love what ever hath relation to him.* As,

1. His Houſe, and Worſhip there performed. Saints love Communion with Chriſt, love to be where he is, *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, his People love the threſhold of the Sanctuary*, Pſal. 120. 14. *Thy ſervants take pleaſure in her ſtones, they favour the duſt thereof*, Pſal. 26. 8. *Lord I have loved the habitation of thy Houſe, and the place where thy Honour dwelleth.* Pſal. 122. 1. *I was glad when they ſaid, Let us go up to the*

House of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.

2. Saints dearly love the Truth and Word of the Lord. As their voice is sweet to him in prayer, *Cant.* 2. 14. So his voice in his Word is sweet to them, *Psal.* 119. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste? Yea sweeter then honey to my mouth*, vers. 72. *The Law of thy mouth is dearer to me then thousands of Gold and Silver.* The very reproofs of Christ are precious to them, Psal. 141. 5. Our love to Christ is not right if we be impatient of admonition, if we cannot endure reproof for sin, but swell against it, it is a sign we love sin, which cannot consist with unfeigned love to Christ.

3. His Messengers are welcom, & their feet *beautiful*, *Rom.* 10. 14. Because they are the servants of Christ, and shew us the way of savation, therefore we have them in reputation, *Phil.* 2. 29. *Because they are over us in the Lord, and admonish us, therfore we esteem them highly in love for their works sake*, 1 Thes. 5. 13. But if we repine, stomach, or maligne his Embassadors taxing our crimes, though in sharpest terms; or, if we neglect to examine our hearts and consciences at their request or instance, it is a sure token our perswasions of Faith and love unto him are but fancies, that we are still in the gall of bitterness, enemies as cruel to him as these *Jews* were, &c. *Dr. Jackson.*

4. His Day, the Lords Day. *Rev.* 1. 10. is to all sincere lovers of Christ a joyful Day, a Day of delight, *Isa.* 58. 13. On this Day Christ appeared to his Disciples after his Resurrection; upon this Day he still appeareth to his People, making neer approaches to their souls, in his blessed Ordinances, teaching them, inlightning them, comforting their hearts, and perswading the things concerning the Kingdom of God,

Luke

Luke 24. 32. *Did not our hearts burn within us, whileſt he talked with us, and opened unto us the Scriptures?*

5. The Lords Table, where he feaſteth his Friends, as *Cant.* 5. 1. and bids them welcome, ſaying, *Eat, O Friends, Drink, yea drink abundantly, O Wel-beloved.* I appeal to the conſciences of many ſincere Chriſtians, when they have taken moſt pains with their own hearts, to get them into frame againſt a Sacramental day, when they have been deeply humbled in ſelf-abhorrency, broken in confeſſions, with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered; if God have not ſpoken peace to their ſouls, Son, daughter, be of good chear, thy ſins be forgiven: if their hearts have not danced for joy, as *David* did before the Ark?

6. The Lord's People, his faithful Members, are they thy friends, thy companions, of thy intimate ſociety? doſt thou prefer them to others, *Pſal.* 16. 3. as the only excellent ones, 119. 63. *I am companion to all that fear thee*; to all, even to poor Saints as well as rich, deſpiſed as well as honourable; doſt thou relieve them in want, ſuccour them in miſery, viſit them if in Priſon, and therefore, becauſe they belong to Chriſt, have much of Chriſt in them? This he taketh kindly, *Mark* 9. 41. becauſe they belong to Chriſt.

7. Doſt thou love the Day of Chriſt's appearing? which though it be black and gloomy, a terrible day to the proud, and all ungodly enemies of Chriſt, yet is it a day much to be deſired by all that love the Lord, who may rejoyce and lift up their heads in joyful hope of this Dayes approach, their Redemption draweth nigh; now is their Salvation nearer than when firſt they believed; now ſhall the Elect receive the end of their Faith, and Hope, and Prayers, and Tears, and Sufferings. 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. It is made a character of the righteous, that they love the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt,

Heb. 5. *ult.* Unto them that look for him. *Tit.* 2. 13. *Looking for, &c.* Not only looking for, but *haſting to the coming of the Day of God*, 2 Pet. 3. 12.

3d. *Note* is in Chriſt's own words, *John* 14. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, all, one as well as another, hard as well as eaſie. *John* 15. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you. Abraham* is called *the Friend of God*, and his friendſhip was tried and approved by his obedience to thoſe hard Commandments of leaving his Country, and offering up his only ſon, his ſon *Iſaac* whom he loved. The partial obedience of moſt people is no obedience at all, argueth no ſincere love to Chriſt.

4. To ſuffer for Chriſt, to part with our deareſt intereſts for him, argueth ſincere love to him. *Jacob* endured a hard ſervice of ſeven years for *Rachel*, which though long, becauſe hard, yet ſeemed to him but as a few dayes, for the love he had unto her. *Jonathan* endured his father's diſpleaſure for *David*, whom he loved, and was well content to part with his hope in the Kingdom, becauſe he loved him as his own ſoul. The *Martyrs* (Rev. 12. 11.) *loved not their lives unto the death.* The Apoſtles went away rejoycing they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the *Name* of *Chriſt*. If we dare not adventure to ſuffer the ſpoyling of our Goods, dare not hazard the frown or diſpleaſure of a Landlord, dare not ſuffer the loſs of Name or Reputation for Chriſt and his Goſpel; how dwelleth his Love in us?

5. Who love the Lord in ſincerity, will not eaſily part with Him, his Comforts, his Graces, his Preſence and Power of his Ordinances. *Exod.* 21. 5. The ſervant that loved his maſter, and the family, would not go out free; Love prevailed above Liberty, which is very deſirable. To ſincere Chriſtians the abſence of Chriſt

Christ is grievous, how they mourn to part with Ordinances, in which they have found sweet communion with Christ. *David* in the Wilderness how he longed after God! *Psal.* 63. 1. With sorrow and weeping tears the Disciples take their leave of St. *Paul*, Acts 20. *ult.* when they were to see his face no more. Those people that with those *Jews*, Acts 13. 50. expel Ministers out of their coasts, or with them, *Luke* 4. 29. thrust *Christ* out of their City, or with the more mannerly *Gadarens*, who besought him to depart from them; who can be content to suffer a famine of the Word, rather than be at the cost of maintaining a Preaching-Minister; they will not buy the Truth so dear; who are well enough pleased to see their Ministers removed, burning and shining Lights put under a bed or a bushel, Teachers driven into corners; do give a plain demonstration how little love they have to Jesus Christ; it is evident they prefer their Swine, their Gain, their Money, to Jesus Christ.

Now I beseech you, Brethren, take a little pains to try the truth of your Love to Christ. It will be the greatest comfort to your souls of any thing in this world, if upon good ground it may appear you are of them that love the Lord in sincerity. What bonefires of joy may such Christians make in their hearts, in the saddest times, and darkest night of affliction? *Psal.* 112. 4. *To the upright ariseth light in darkness.* If you love Christ, be sure ye are of him beloved. *Prov.* 8. 17. *I love them that love me.* To you he will be a never-failing friend in trouble, in sickness, in all afflictions, in life and death; and at the day of Judgement, to you ~~them~~ he will pronounce that heart-chearing sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, &c.*

But if by the foregoing Evidences, taken out of the Scriptures of Truth, the contrary do appear, and we

be not found amongſt Chriſts real Friends, but however we may flatter our ſelves, among his enemies, and of them that hate Him, then ſhall we from his mouth hear that heart-breaking doom, *Depart from me ye curſed, &c. I never knew you.* And *if any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maranatha.*

SERMON VI.

Epheſ. 6. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.*

WE come now to ſpeak to the ſecond Doctrine, which is this:

Doct. 2. *The beſt thing in the world is Grace*; not gifts, parts which are *Gratiæ, gratis datæ*, of an inferiour nature, which the Apoſtle elſewhere wiſheth for his *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 5. But here, being to take his leave of his People, wiſheth for them *ſaving Grace*; ſuch as Faith, Remiſſion of ſins, Fellowſhip with all Saints in the general Reſurrection. So *Haimo, in locum.*

That Grace is ſo excellent a thing, appeareth in this, That the Apoſtle in all or moſt of his Epiſtles, both begins and ends with it. His firſt ſalutation in the entrance, is, *Grace be unto you, and Peace*, to which he ſometimes addeth *Mercy*. *Grace* to renew our nature, *Peace* of conſcience, *Mercy* for pardon of ſin. "If we "find ſin pardoned, our perſons accepted, our na"tures altered, then may we comfort our ſelves, *&c.* ſaith Dr. *Sibbs*.

In like manner *David* took his leave of *Ittai*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 20. *Mercy and Truth be with thee.* Such was Chriſt's valedictory Prayer for his Apoſtles, *John* 17.

for

for Grace to be kept from the evil of ſin, *ver.* 15. for Sanctification, *ver.* 17. for Unity, *&c.*

Prov. 3. 13, 15. and 4. 7. *Wiſdom, i.e.* Wiſdom to Salvation. Grace is the principal thing.

Reaſons of the Point.

1. Grace promoteth the higheſt end of man, which is, (1.) the Glory of God, to which end we were born, and for which cauſe we came into the world. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* Grace helps to ſerve God acceptably, *Heb.* 12. 28. Grace teacheth *to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and to live godly, &c.* Tit. 2. 11. (2.) Reaſon teacheth to live as men, Grace as Chriſtians; it enableth to every good work, teacheth us to do our duty to God, our neighbour, to our ſelves. It teacheth to pray acceptably, to hear as the Word of God; to keep Sabbath, to ſhew mercy, to forgive injuries, to do all in obedience; which maketh much to God's Glory.

2. *Reaſon.* Grace is the beſt thing; for it promoteth the Salvation of the ſoul, which is the beſt part. Sin is the plague, deſtruction of the ſoul, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. Grace healeth, ſanctifieth, ſaveth the ſoul. Sin infecteth every part, faculty: Grace ſanctifieth all. Sin blindeth the eye, hardneth the heart, poiſoneth the affections, corrupteth the life, defileth, deformeth the whole ſoul. Grace enlightens the eyes, ſoftens the heart, cleanſeth, beautifieth, purifieth, maketh lovely what Sin had made odious. *Eph.* 2. 5. *By Grace ye are ſaved.*

3. Grace is the beſt thing; for it makes a man better, beneficial to others. Riches, honours, proſperity render few better, many worſe. Grace maketh bad Parents good, and good ones better; better Children, better Husbands, Wives, better Miniſters, People, Maſters,

Maſters, Servants, better Neighbours, Friends, better in all Relations. Without Grace a man is unprofitable, hurtful; *Lions*, *Bears* are wicked men called in Scripture, yea *Dogs*, *Swine* for their brutiſh qualities. Grace rectifies the crookedneſs of nature, *Emollit mores, &c.* ſweetens mens manners, ſuffers them not to remain wild. A heart taught by the Grace of God, is full of pity and compaſſion, ſheweth mercy; the hand helps, relieveth, the tongue ſpeaks to comfort, edification; no corrupt communication is heard, but gracious words from gracious hearts, *Col.* 4. 6. *Paul* wrought upon by Grace, preacheth the Faith he once deſtroyed, *Gal.* 1. 23. *Oneſimus*, before Grace received, was unprofitable, but now by Grace converted, is become profitable, as his name imports, *Philem.* 10.

4. The Excellency of Grace appears hence; It renders a Chriſtian acceptable to God, as well as uſeful to man. And that is the higheſt of a poor Chriſtians ambition, that he may find favour in the ſight of his God; that his ſervices and ſacrifices may come with acceptance before God, *Mal.* 3. 4. Parts, gifts commend us to men only, Grace giveth us favour, approbation with God. And this is the other branch of the Schools diſtinction, *Gratiæ gratum facientes*, which they prefer to *Gratiæ gratis dantes*. It is the *prayer of the upright heart*, not of the voluble tongue, that *is God's delight*, Prov. 15. 8. *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth*, Pſal. 145. 18. *But the ſacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God*, Prov. 15. 8.

5. Grace is the beſt thing, becauſe it laſteth longeſt, it endures for ever. *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the Crown endure to all generations*, Prov. 27. 24. *Pleaſures of ſin are but for a ſeaſon*, Heb. 11. 25. Carnal mirth is ſoon at an end, like the crackling of thorns, *Eccl.* 7. 6. But Grace abideth. 1 *Cor.* 13. 13. *And now abideth Faith,*

Faith, Hope, Charity. 1 Joh. 2. 17. *The world paſſeth away and the luſt thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.*

6. Grace is the beſt thing, becauſe it helpeth in time of moſt need, *Heb.* 4. *ult.*

(1.) Grace helpeth in time of affliction, it comforteth, quieteth the heart. *Pſal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted unleſs I had believed.* Grace giveth intereſt in God, who is a preſent help in trouble. It intereſteth in Gods Power, Wiſdom, Mercy, Goodneſs. Grace can look up to God, ſee him ſmile when men frown, ſee him at peace in mans hatred. *Stephen* looked up, ſaw Heaven open, Chriſt ready to receive him. *Paul* ſaw the Lord encouraging, *Acts* 23. 11. *Be of good chear Paul.*

(2.) Grace helpeth in the hour of death. *Prov.* 14. 32. *The Righteous hath hope in his death.* When there is no comfort in Riches, Offices, Friends; *vain is the help of man.* Grace diſarmeth the King of Terrors: *O Death, where is thy ſting?* Death is welcome to a gracious perſon, as a meſſenger ſent to conduct him to his Father's houſe, to his own Country, to his beſt Friends, to Jeſus Chriſt whom his ſoul loveth. *Bleſſed are they that dye in the Lord.*

(3.) At the day of Judgement, Grace will find favour, will make the Judge our Friend, our Advocate. Grace will cloath the ſoul with Jeſus Chriſt, his Robes, his Righteouſneſs. *Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,* Rev. 16. 15.

1. *Uſe of Inſtruction.*

1. Take notice what a Bleſſing it is to enjoy the means of Grace, to live in a valley of Viſion, to ſit under a powerful Miniſtry, to have the benefit of good Education, religious Parents, their Inſtruction and holy Example, to have Bibles, Catechiſms, Sabbath-dayes, and Sacramental-dayes, the Market-dayes for

Grace

Grace by the bleſſing of God, upon which the ſoul may be converted, and [illegible] be made wiſe to Salvation. Happy is that people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, thrice happy are they who improve the means to the Ends aforeſaid: happy we, *if we know in this our day the things that belong to our peace.*

2. Then the beſt pains, labour, coſt, that any of us can beſtow, is to lay out our ſelves in the getting of Grace; that time is beſt ſpent which is ſpent for Grace. *With all thy getting, get Underſtanding*, Prov. 4.7. ſaith *Solomon*. And a greater than *Solomon* hath told us, *That Godlineſs is the beſt part*, Luke 20. *ult. Mary hath choſen the good part*, &c. Whileſt others are laying up riches that periſh, treaſures that vaniſh away, clothes that wax old, gold and ſilver that ruſt, Chriſtians are ſtoring their hearts with Grace: Whilſt others are making their Lands and temporal Eſtates ſure, Chriſtians are making their Calling and Election ſure: Whilſt others are laying hold on advantages for this preſent life, Chriſtians are laying hold on Eternal Life.

3. The beſt portion Parents can lay up for their Children, is not riches, worldly greatneſs, but Grace, the favour of God, intereſt in Chriſt and the Covenant of Grace. The beſt Trade they can teach them, is the fear of the Lord, to keep holy the Lords Day, to flie Vice, to follow after Vertue, to exerciſe them in Godlineſs.

The ſecond Uſe is of Reproof.

To reprove the too ſlight eſteem men have of the Grace of God, undervaluing a Pearl of ſuch price, trampling under foot a Jewel more worth than the Gold of *Ophir*. How long, O ye ſimple worldlings, will ye love ſimplicity? How long will ye riſe early, ſet up late, eate the bread of care-

carefulneſs, and all to load your ſelves with the thick clay of the world, the duſt and dung of the Earth, and in the mean time neglect Saving-Grace? Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not? *Iſa.* 55. 2. It is chiefly for this, that the Wiſdom of God charageth worldlings with folly, who yet applaud themſelves for the only wiſe men, Luke 12. 20, 21. *So is he,* (*i. e.* a fool like the rich man in the Text) *that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich to God.*

Hearken I beſeech you, ye deſpiſers and abuſers of the Grace of God, be convinced of the worth of that ye ſo neglect. 1. God himſelf is ſtiled, *The God of all Grace,* 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of Hope,* Rom. 15. 13. *The God of Patience,* Rom. 15. 5. He it is that *ſanctifieth, juſtifieth,* pardoneth *iniquity, tranſgreſſion* and *ſin.*

2. It is Grace which God reſerveth as a portion for his Children, his peculiar People, his beſt Friends, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.* James 2. 5. *Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in Faith? Abraham* gave gifts to the Sons of the Concubines; but the Inheritance he reſerved for *Iſaac.* So God gives the Earth to the Children of men, earthly bleſſings, *Pſal.* 115. 16. but Grace and the good things of Heaven, are his Childrens portion. *Eſau* had the fat of the Earth, but *Jacob* the Dew of Heaven.

3. It is Grace which Saints deſire, long for, labour for above all things, and are ſatisfied with. *Pſal.* 4. 6. *Lord lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon us; this is better than abundance of Corn and Wine.* Pſal. 63. 5. *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs.*

4. Grace is the end of every Ordinance. The Word is called, *The Word of Faith, The Word of Grace,* Rom. 10. 8. Acts 20. 32. The Miniſtry is, *The Miniſtry,*

viſtry of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5.18. The Goſpel is, *The Miniſtration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor.3.8. *The Diſpenſation of the Grace of God*, Epheſ.3.2.

Prayer is a coming to the Throne of Grace, for this end, That we may find Grace, *Heb.*4. *ult.* The Sacraments in their right uſe, do ſeal and confirm Grace, *Rom.*4.11.

5. It is Grace which Satan chiefly aimeth to rob Chriſtians of; by tempting to ſin he ſeeketh to withdraw us from Grace. He tempted *Job* to drive him from his integrity. He deſired to ſift *Peter*, that his Faith might fail him. Luke 22. 31. *He walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour, by ſpoiling them of God's Grace.*

By all which appears the excellency of Grace; the greater is their ſin who undervalue it.

The third Uſe is of *Comfort* for the poor and needy Chriſtians, who are troubled at their outward wants. Hearken, O thou poor ſoul, art thou afflicted at thy poverty, nakedneſs, ſickneſs, yet art rich in Grace; is not that better than gold, health, beauty, ſtrength, friends, favour of Great Ones? O be thankful: ſay as *Mat.* 11. 25. *Father I thank thee*, &c. the lot is fallen to thee in a goodly place, thou haſt a pleaſant heritage; I am ſure thou wouldſt not change conditions with the wealthieſt, healthfulleſt, beautifulleſt graceleſs perſon in the world. Others have the nether ſprings of earthly riches; thou haſt the upper Springs of heavenly Treaſures. Others have the bleſſings of God's left hand, the fulneſs of this world; thou haſt *Benjamins* Portion, a double Bleſſing, even the Bleſſing of the Right hand, the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation. Say as *Pſal.*116.12.

Laſt

Laſt Uſe is of Exhortation.

1. To graceleſs perſons, That they would above all things labour after Grace. *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth*, i. e. not ſo much as for that which endureth.

Motives.

1. Grace is moſt excellent. There is an attractive vertue in things of worth. If carnal eyes were but opened to ſee the Excellency of Grace, *Mirabilas ſui excitaret amores*, It would raviſh the ſoul in deſires after it. But Grace's Beauty is internal, ſo is not diſcerned but with ſpiritual eyes. *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within*, Pſal. 45. 13. *Our Life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Col. 3. 3.

1. That which maketh the poſſeſſours of it excel, that is truly excellent. *The Righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*: What makes him ſo but Grace? as much as the brighteſt day excels the darkeſt night; the ſtar, a cloud; heaven, earth; ſo much a gracious Chriſtian excels a graceleſs perſon.

2. Grace prepares and fitteth for Glory; ſo do not riches, they often hinder. *Cœlum non capit magna onera Portantes*; God many times ſtrips his People of riches, leſt the love of them ſhould retard or hinder them in their heavenly Journey. Mark 10. 23. *How hardly ſhall they that have riches, enter into the Kingdom of God!* Which in the following verſe our Saviour explains thus, *How hard is it for them that truſt in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!* implying, It is hard to have riches, and not to truſt in them.

3. A third excellency of Grace is, It ſatisfies as well as ſanctifies, the heart; It fills the ſoul with content, in the abſence of created comforts. *I have enough*, ſaith *Jacob*, *now Joſeph is alive*. I have enough, ſaith a gracious ſoul, now God is reconciled, now Chriſt

Christ is mine, *Thy favour is better than life*, Psal. 63. 3.

4. The benefit, comfort of Grace is eternal, the riches of Grace are durable, *Prov.* 8. 18. Other riches perish, *Eccles.* 5. 14. they accompany their owners but to the grave at furthest, there they leave them: whereas Grace accompanieth the soul in death, and after death to all eternity.

2*d Mot.* From the necessity of Grace. Bread is necessary to this life, Grace is much more to life eternal. Without it the best sacrifices are not accepted, *Prov.* 21. 27. Without it we cannot withstand our enemies, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. *Whom resist stedfast in the Faith.* Without it we shall not be able to bear the Cross, ye have need of patience. *Heb.* 10. 36. By *Faith* the Saints endured affliction, were tortured, had tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds, and imprisonment, *Heb.* 11. 25, —35, 36. Without Grace we can neither suffer nor obey the will of God, nor go on comfortably in a Christian course. *Heb.* 11. 8. *By Faith Abraham obeyed.* In a word, without it we cannot be saved. *John* 13. 8. *Except I wash thee thou hast no part in me.* Christ came by water and blood; by water to regenerate, by blood to justifie. So Dr. *Sibbs.*

3. It is possible for them that have no Grace, with care and diligence to obtain it. It is the priviledge of New-Testament-times to be seasons of more plentiful Grace than were the Old-Testament-times: for so is that place to be understood, *John* 7. 38. *The holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*: Whether we take the holy Ghost there, for gifts and spiritual endowments, or the Efficacy of the Spirit accompanying those gifts, in neither sense was the holy Ghost given so plentiously before as after Christ's Ascention,

cention on the day of *Pentecoſt*, and afterwards, *Eph.* 4. 8.

When he aſcended on high he gave gifts unto men. God the Father reſerved the large donative of his Grace for honour of his Sons Aſcention, unto the *laſt times*, as the Goſpel-times are called, whereby ſo many millions of ſouls have been converted to Chriſt. So then, it being our lot, with *Capernaum*, to be lifted up to Heaven, in regard of ſpiritual enjoyments, take heed, with the ſame people, leſt we be caſt down to Hell, for want of good improvement of ſo high priviledges.

Take with us therefore theſe brief *Directions*, that we may not fail or come ſhort of Grace.

1. Be ſure thou have an high eſteem of Grace: for God will not caſt his Pearls before Swine, carnal people that prize them not. We may eaſily over-value theſe ſublunary things, beſtow more ſerious thoughts, labour, ſweat, time, money on them, than they are really worth. But we cannot poſſibly ſet too high a rate on Grace, which we are bidden to covet, follow or purſue, ſeek, ask, knock for, ſtrive for, 1 *Cor.* 12. *ult. Heb.* 12. 14.

2. This eſtimate we ſhall not ſet upon Grace, except we be ſenſible of our want of it. We need not ſeek a thing we have in our hands. Moſt men periſh through lack of Grace, which they ſeek not, labour not for, becauſe they perſwade themſelves they have it already. Be thou poor in ſpirit, deſtitute, blind, naked; *If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, viz.* to them that ask ſo, in ſence of want. God is not like unto man in this reſpect: Men ſend gifts and preſents where is leaſt need; and ſo for them, they that are poor may be poor ſtill: *Semper eris pauper ſi, &c.*

God giveth Grace where moſt need is, He feedeth

 the

the hungry, he inviteth the poor, *Isa.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth.*

Survey the state of thy soul, when thou goest to Prayer, to the Word, Sacrament. As when you go or send to the Market you consider what is wanting, that supply may be made. When thou goest to God's Ordinances, thy Spiritual Market, enquire what is lacking, and there pour out thy heart to God, put up earnest cryes for the work of Grace and Conversion, for a new heart. God hath promised no less than the holy Spirit to them that ask, *Luke* 11. 13. (*i. e.*) that ask so, as in that parable our Saviour teacheth, with fervency and importunity.

3. See thou hunger and thirst after Grace, keep a continued desire and *longing* after it, for so the Participle implyeth. *Matth.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they that are hungring and thirsting.* Psal. 143. 6. *My soul thirsteth after thee as the thirsty Land.* How is that? When the Earth is chopt, and gapes through long drought, it never ceaseth gaping and craving till the Heavens *hear the Earth*, according to *Hos.* 2. 21. So let the *thirsty soul* do. Psal. 123. 2. *As the eyes of a servant, &c. so our eyes wait on the Lord until he have mercy on us.*

4. Delay not the time, take the first opportunity, slip not one Market-day to gain so excellent a Commodity; *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is nigh.* When Shops are shut up, it is too late to make our Markets. Many are afraid of having Grace too soon, they are loth to be holy too soon, to be sanctified too soon, as if Grace were a burden. But why not rather fear we lest we should come too late, as did the foolish Virgins, who dearly rued it, as all shall who in this their day will not know the things of their peace.

5. If thou wilt have Grace, be content to buy it, though

though without money, without price; in buying you part with one thing for another whereof you have more need, ſo muſt thou here; though heavenly commodities are not to be valued for Silver, you know what *Simon Peter* ſaid to *Simon Magus*, *Thy money periſh with thee*, *&c.* yet muſt thou part with that which (it may be) thou valueſt above Silver, *i.e.* thy luſts, *Iſa.* 2. 20. *Idols of Silver*, coſtly ſins muſt be parted with, of them thou haſt no need; if thou part not with them, they will ruine thee; if thou caſt not them away, they will caſt thee away. Sin and Grace, reigning ſin, a way of wickedneſs, is inconſiſtent with Grace; *God* and *Belial*, the *Ark* and *Dagon* will not agree under the ſame roof. The Spirit of God, is a holy, pure, delicate Spirit, will be grieved, and at laſt will be gone, if that unclean ſpirit the Devil be entertained by a voluntary reſignation of thy heart, to the love of any courſe of ſin or impiety. If the bleſſed Spirit of Grace will vouchſafe to be thy Gueſt, O prepare him a lodging, as *Paul* writes to *Philemon*, ver. 22. of that Epiſtle, *Purge thy ſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*.

6. Diligence in the uſe of means, conſtant attendance on the Ordinances of Grace, is neceſſary to the obtaining of Grace. Frequent daily the Throne of Grace by fervent prayer, wait duly at the poſts of wiſdoms houſe by attentive hearing the Word, make conſcience of ſanctifying the Lords day, be not thou abſent from Gods houſe when he deals his dole of Grace and Bleſſing to his People, uſe the ſociety of Gracious perſons, whoſe communication is ſavory, and their words miniſter Grace to the hearers; and be conſtant in exerciſes of Godlineſs; follow *Pauls* counſel to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. *Meditate on theſe things, continue in them, give thy ſelf much unto them, that thy profiting may appear. The diligent hand maketh rich*, when

drowſineſs clotheth a man with rags, which is as true in ſpiritual as in temporal things.

2d. *Branch of Exhortation.* If Grace be the beſt thing in the world, let Chriſtians that have Grace already labour for further degrees of it; *Grow in Grace*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. Grace and ſanctification is not perfect at once, but hath its ſeveral ages and periods of growth. We read of the *Embrio*, or the forming the new man in the womb, *Gal.* 4. 19. *The new-born babe*, 1 Pet 2. 2. *little children*, 1 *John* 2. 13. *young men*, ib. aged Chriſtians, *ib.* and *Pſal.* 92. 14. *ſhall bring forth more fruit in old age.*

To this purpoſe are the commands in Scripture, to *abound more and more*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 1. *that your love may abound*, Phil. 1. 9. *alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. *ult.*

They are likewiſe commended who are rich in Grace and fruits of holineſs, *Matt.* 15. 28. *O woman great is thy Faith!* Matt. 8. 10. *I have not found ſo great Faith, no not in Iſrael.* So on the contrary, dwarfs in Chriſtianity are blame-worthy, *Matt.* 6. 30. *O ye of little Faith.* 1 *Cor.* 3. 4. *Are ye not yet carnal?* that is, *babes in Chriſt*, as ver. 1. more fleſh than ſpirit.

Motives to grow in Grace.

1. That we may anſwer, not fruſtrate God's expectation. *Luke* 12. 48. *Where much is given, there much is required*; Iſa. 5. 3. *I looked for grapes*; and well he might expect ſtore of fruit of a Vineyard ſo huſbanded.

2. Much Grace will produce much Obedience; greater Faith, greater Obedience, and that hereafter will conduce more to the glory of God, *Rom.* 4. 20. *Abraham being ſtrong in Faith, gave glory to God*: The more Grace the better lives will Chriſtians lead, whereby

whereby God is more glorified, *John* 15. 8. *Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.*

2. Much obedience wil be more to our own comfort, for God will reward every one according to his works. 1 *Cor.* 15. *ult. Knowing your labour not to be in vain in the Lord.* If there be degrees of Glory, ſure they are beſtowed according to improvment of talents here: He that had gained ten pounds, had Authority over ten Cities; and he that had gained five pounds, was made Ruler over five Cities, *Luke* 19. 17, 19. *He that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6.

2. Here in this life God uſually metes to us as we meaſure to him, according to our obedience ſo is our comfort, *Luke* 6. 38. Where no care of obedience, no comfort; little Faith, little comfort: hence Chriſtians of little Faith, little obedience, are much diſquieted about their comfort and aſſurance.

3. We need much Grace to conquer many corruptions, great luſts, to reſiſt ſtrong temptations. Some ſins like thoſe Devils, are not eaſily caſt out, *Matt.* 17. 21. It is by Faith Chriſtians overcome the world, 1 *John* 5. 4. but a little Faith will hardly overcome the temptations on the right hand, from worldly proſperity, temptations on the left hand, perſecutions of the world; it muſt be a ſtrong Faith that muſt ſtop the mouths of *Lions*, ſubdue Kingdoms, quench the violence of fire, *Heb* 11. 35. ſmall ſtrength of Grace will be more like to faint in the day of battel, than conquer ſtrong oppoſition. *Prov.* 24. 10. *If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall.*

4. There be hard leſſons to be learned, hard duties to be performed in Chriſtianity, whereunto is requiſit more ſtore of Grace: Some ſtick at eaſie duties, how will they go thorow with harder? Who cannot hold out

with ſoot-men, how will they run with horſe-men? They who are tired with family duties, how will they perform thoſe of ſelf-denial, heart-examination, mortification? which are as the cutting off the right hand, or plucking out the right eye: How will they love their enemies, forgive injuries, forbear revenge? to the performance of which Chriſtians need pray, as, *Luke* 17. 4. *Lord increaſe our Faith.* If God bid us do ſome great thing, as to lay down our lives, we ought to refuſe none of his commands, How much leſs ought we ~~not~~ to ſtick at duties of ſo eaſie a nature?

5. Chriſtians may be brought into great ſtraits, out of which to extricate themſelves, they need ſtore of Grace, much Faith, more wiſdome, great courage. *Let not your hearts be troubled*, ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples ſorrowing for his abſence, *John* 14. 1. How ſhal they remedy that? *Ye believe in God, Believe alſo in me*; Some Faith they had already, but they will need more to prevent trouble of heart. *Hab.* 1. 2. The Prophet complains of bad times, violence and ſpoil all along that Chapter. How ſhall the iniquity of times be helped? See *Chap.* 2. 4. *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*, the beſt remedy for ſad times; then they muſt have Faith, ſtore of Faith, that intend to live upon it; when times are ſo bad, that Believers have nothing elſe left but Faith to live upon. In great ſtorms we need great courage, leſt we ſink. *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid, &c. his heart is fixed.*

6. The beſt evidence of truth of Grace, is growth. If plants grow, if young cattel thrive, be ſure they live; when Chriſtians thrive not, are as ignorant now as they were ſeven years ago, are as luke-warm, &c. they may ſuſpect whether ever they were born again, or began to live the life of Grace.

Helps to grow, beſides thoſe which belong to the former branch of Exhortation, which may be uſeful here.

1. Beware thou judge not thy ſelf ſtrong when thou art weak, nay, when thou haſt no Grace at all, as is too uſual, *Laodicea*-like, *Rev.* 3.17. *Thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, &c. Prov.* 13.7. *There is that maketh himſelf rich, yet hath nothing*: Thou maieſt have long time enjoyed the means, yet not have made anſwerable progreſs in practical Godlineſs. Some children go to ſchool ſeven years, yet arrive not at ſo good degrees of learning, as others do in half that time. *Iſrael* in their wilderneſs wanderings ſpent neer forty years in going eleven dayes journey, *Deut.* 1. 2. *Heb.* 5. 12. Some at ſixty years Profeſſion are inferior to others of ſixteen; who for the time they have had to learn, ought to be teachers of others, had need one teach them the principles of Religion, and have need of milk, &c.

2. Beware thou never entertain a conceit of having Grace enough, nor ever ſtint thy ſelf to a certain meaſure of Grace; of worldly riches a man may have enough and ſurfet, but of Grace thou canſt not ſurfet, canſt not be too greedy; thou maiſt love the world too much, canſt not love Chriſt too much, canſt not have too much humility, too much meekneſs, zeal, ſo it be according to knowledge: here the proverb is moſt true, *Store is no ſore*, much Grace will be no burden.

3. Be ſure thou live, be in Chriſt, for dead things grow not; in Chriſt is all fulneſs, of him muſt we receive, *John* 1.16. *in him are all treaſures of wiſdom and knowledg*; The branch cannot grow that is cut off from the ſtock, *John* 15. 4. *no more can ye except ye abide in me.* Chriſt is Author and finiſher of our Faith, and all

Grace; to him muſt we be united, receive influence from him, have much recourſe to him, communion with him.

4. Be very humble, aſcribe all thy ſufficiency to God. He muſt be as the dew to *Iſrael* ere he can grow as the Lilly, *Hoſ.* 14. 5, 8. *from me is thy fruit found.* God hath great reſpect for humble Perſons, becauſe they will be moſt thankful, and aſcribe all their fruitfulneſs unto God, which proud Perſons arrogate to themſelves: Therefore God will teach the meek, hath reſpect to the lowly, *giveth more Grace to the humble, Jam.* 4. 6.

5. Improve what thou haſt, exerciſe Grace received, exerciſes in Learning, Scholaſtick diſputations, declamations, ſpeaking *Latine*, increaſe learning. Acts intend habits. The more a child exerciſeth his writing, reading, the better he will write and read; the more a Chriſtian putteth forth acts of Piety, Charity, Mortification, Prayer, &c. the more Pious and Gracious he will prove himſelf. *To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance*, Matt. 13. 12. It is not in ſpiritual as in corporal things, the more you uſe them, the more you wear and waſte them; but as it is with a fountain, the more you draw, the more it ſprings, *labitur et labetur, &c.*

6. Beware of whatever may blaſt and hinder the growth of Grace; as, 1. Take heed of growing ſtrange, neglect not communion with God; Gracious walking is walking with God; *in-deſinenter cum Deo ambulavit*, is ſaid of *Enoch*. 2. Beware of all ſin, eſpecially pride, that blaſteth Grace, as humility preſerveth it, *God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble.* 3. Formality, barrenneſs in duty. 4. Worldlineſs, as ſhining of the Sun puts out fire, ſo hot purſuit of the world cauſeth cooling and decaying in Grace. 5. Ill com-

company, ſociety of graceleſs perſons, is a great quench-coal to Grace; the body is not ſo apt to catch the plague from perſons infected, as evil communications, and ill converſation of lewd companions, is prone to corrupt the mind and manners. Who walketh in the Sun, ſhall be tanned, though he walk not for that end; who is much in the Mill, may diſcern it in his clothes; who ſits in the Apothecaries ſhop much, will ſmell of his Ointments: So he that converſeth with the froward, graceleſs ſinner, will learn of his wayes and be like him: For the worſt precepts, counſels, examples prevail moſt.

SERMON VII.

by Mr. William Cross. of Beston, Nottinghamsh.e

1 Sam. 30. 6.

But David encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.

THe difference betwixt the friendſhip of God, and the friendſhip of men, appears beſt in a day of adverſity; for then the latter proves fickle and deceitful, but the former durable and laſting. A notable inſtance whereof is repreſented in this portion of Scripture, wherein we have *David's* friends and followers turning his enemies, but God continuing his faſt friend, in whom he may encourage himſelf.

In the words we have theſe three Generals.

1. The perſon concerned, and that is *David*, a Prophet of the Lord, and Ruler of his People, by the appointment of God. *David encouraged himſelf.*

2. His behaviour, he *encouraged himſelf in God*; comforted and ſtrengthened himſelf in *Jehovah* his God.

3. The occaſion of this behaviour, and that was the great

great distress he was in, which is hinted in the beginning of the verse; *David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him.* He was an Exile already, driven from his Country, and from his habitation, by the rage and jealousie of *Saul:* His City, *Ziglag*, was sack'd and burnt by the *Amalakites*; his Wives and Children carried captive; and, which was worst of all, his Friends and Followers spake of stoning him, looking on him as the cause of all the misery that had befallen them: this was a sore distress, he had nothing left now wherein he might comfort himself, *God* only excepted. *David* was greatly distressed; *but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

Hence we may take notice by the way, *That God many times suffers his own dear and precious Ones to be greatly distressed. David* was a man after God's own heart, yet *David* was *greatly distressed.* This might be abundantly strengthened by the condition of the Church and People of God in all Ages. And this God doth for these ends amongst many other;

1. To take his People off from an arm of flesh, from leaning upon humane props, that they should not trust in themselves, or any other, but in God alone. 2 *Chr.* 20. 12. *We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* 2 Cor. 1. 9. *We had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.*

2. To prove their Graces, to try their Faith and Hope. God will see whether we can hold out in a storm, whether we can trust him without a pledge in our hands; he will see whether we can encourage our selves in Him, when we have no outward mercies to lead us to him.

3. To magnifie his own Name by their deliverance. 'Tis the strongest argument we can urge to God in our troubles,

troubles, *What wilt thou do for thy great Name?* The greatneſs of the diſtreſs greatneth the deliverance out of it, and this advanceth the glory of the Deliverer.

But come we to the words which we have pitched upon, which hold forth the behaviour of *David* in his diſtreſs; *he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.* Whence we may gather theſe two Doctrines.

1. That Believers have an intereſt in God; *the Lord his God.*

2. There's enough in God to encourage a Believer when greatly diſtreſſed. *David* was in great diſtreſs, ſorely beſet with troubles; his enemies deſtroying on one hand, his followers gathering ſtones to ſtone him on the other hand; but for all this *he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.* I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe.

1. *Believers have an intereſt in God.* We have the Saints every-where uſing this phraſe, which holds forth their propriety in God, *Deut.* 6. 4. *The Lord our God is One Lord.* Joſh. 14. 8. *I wholly followed the Lord my God.* John 20. 28. *Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord, and my God.*

This intereſt and propriety in God, holds forth theſe three things.

1. *A nearneſs to God.* 'Tis the miſery of graceleſs perſons, that they are far off from God: But now Believers are nigh to God. The Pſalmiſt calls this one of *Iſraels* priviledges, *Pſal.* 148. 14. *He exalteth the horn of his People, the praiſe of all his Saints; even of the children of Iſrael, a People near unto him.* O 'tis a priviledge indeed to be a People near to God. *Epheſ.* 2. 13. *But now in Chriſt Jeſus, you who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.* Believers are brought nigh to God, they are even ſet under his wing of Providence and ſpecial Protection.

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2. *A Relation to him.* [*Our God*] implies ſome very near relation to God; he is the Believers Father by Grace: 'tis the miſery of the Wicked that God is not their Father, but *they are of their father the Devil*, as our Saviour tells them, *John* 8.44. But every *Believer* is related to God, as a child to his father. 2 *Cor.*6.18. *I will be to you a Father, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* We are not only made nigh to God, but *nigh in relation*: He that can ſay, *My God*, may ſay alſo, *My Father*. This relation is held out in this intereſt and propriety.

3. *A Right to God.* Whole God is a *Believers*, God and all he hath, all he is, all he can do. This is a vaſt priviledge; *My God*, there's my right and title to him; He is the Believers portion, his inheritance, his eſtate made ſure to him: he may call God his, and the Power of God his, the Wiſdom of God his, the Goodneſs and Mercy of God he may call it all his, he hath a right to it. Thus you ſee what is held forth in this Intereſt.

Come we now to ſhew how Believers do obtain this their Intereſt and Propriety in God.

1. The foundation of this Intereſt is laid in the free Love of God to their ſouls; We can ſhew no other ground of all thoſe rich heavenly priviledges Believers enjoy, but only this, becauſe *God loved them from eternity*; this is the bottom of all; every one of our priviledges is laid in God's love: Whom God loved from eternity, them he choſe from eternity to be a People nigh unto him, that ſhould have intereſt and propriety in him: Hence it is Believers are called *Elect* and *Choſen ones*, Eph. 1. 4. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world.*

2. 'Tis ratified and made ſure by the Covenant of Grace. When God having brought the ſoul over

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to himſelf, and enriched it with Faith and other Graces, comes actually to ſtrike covenant with him, than is this intereſt and propriety in God eſtabliſhed, and made firm; this appears from the very tenour of the Covenant of Grace, *Jer.* 31. 33. *This ſhall be the Covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe dayes ſaith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my People*; God hath given his People an intereſt in himſelf, and he hath confirmed this by Oath and Covenant, he hath ſworn that he will be the Believers God.

Come we to apply this Doctrine.

1. Have Believers an intereſt in God? We may here ſtand and wonder at the honour that is beſtowed upon Believers. Surely the outward glory of *Solomon* fell ſhort of this; to be a People near to God is a high honour: to be related to him is a great dignity, but to have a right to God and all in God, is a priviledge not to be fathomed by humane apprehension; and yet this honour have all the Saints, though in their outward condition never ſo poor and contemtible; tis the greateſt honour in the world to be able to ſay, *My God.* If *David* was filled with admiration that he ſhould be ſon in law to the King; How may the hearts of Believers run over, when they conſider what honour they have, in being Sons of God!

2. Have Believers an intereſt in God? Then in vain do Satan and his Inſtruments labour to make them miſerable: Can any man be miſerable that hath an intereſt in God? Men would have judged *David* a miſerable man, but he hath a friend to ſtand by him, in whom he *encourageth himſelf.* Will God forſake his People? will he ſuffer men to ſpoil his Jewels? No, they do but poliſh them: if Satan and his inſtruments could

could diſſolve this intereſt, and pluck Believers out of God's arms, than were their miſery at hand, but this they cannot do. God feels the blows which Believers receive. *Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me?* He is touched with all their injuries; and ſurely he is able to ſave them.

3. Have Believers an intereſt in God? Then hath God alſo an intereſt in them, and this Believers muſt know and remember; this propriety is mutual betwixt God and his Saints; as he is theirs, ſo they are his, not their own: This muſt put us in mind of our duty, that we do not altogether dwell upon priviledges, and forget duty: We muſt not boaſt of our propriety in God, and ſerve our ſelves, and our own luſts. As God in his Covenant ſayes, *I will be their God*, ſo he adds, *and they ſhall be my People*: and for this end he promiſeth to *put his Laws in our inward parts, and write them in our hearts*, that ſo we may yeeld him Covenant-obedience. Remember Chriſtian, thou art not thine own, but God's; 'tis not for thee to ſerve, love and pleaſe thy ſelf, but God. As we have right to all God hath, and can do, ſo hath God right to all we have, and can do; our gifts, parts, ſtrength, time, and eſtates muſt be laid out for God.

4. Have Believers an intereſt in God? then let them pity ſuch as have not, and ſtrive to bring them under this happineſs; let our ſouls bleed within us to conſider how many thouſands are ſtrangers, yea, and enemies to God, and without God in the world. Canſt thou call God thy God? there are many thouſands in the world that cannot do this: Canſt thou call God Father? O how many are there that cannot do this in Faith! Pity ſuch and pray for them, yea labour by all means to bring them home to God: See whether there be no ſuch in your families, or amongſt your kindred

and

and neighbours: Are not many of theſe in the gall of bitterneſs and in the bond of iniquity? if ſo, pity ſuch ſouls, and labour to pray them in to God, that they alſo may have an intereſt in him.

5. Have Believers an intereſt in God? This ſpeaks exceeding great joy and comfort to Beleivers; ſuch as can ſay with *David*, *The Lord my God*: If we knew God better, we ſhould underſtand more of this great conſolation: The ſerious thought of this intereſt in God, is able to make a Believers joy to exceed all bounds. The conſolation will empty it ſelf into theſe four chanels; *expreſſion.*

1. If God be thine, thou then art Gods, and he will own thee, he will preſerve thee, he will provide for thee, thou needeſt not torment thy ſelf with carefulneſs who haſt ſuch a God to care for thee. There is as much comfort in that laſt branch of the Covenant, *they ſhall be my People*, as their is in the former, *I will be their God.*

2. If God be thine, then is his Chriſt thine, thou haſt an intereſt in Chriſt and all his Sufferings, his Merits and Righteouſneſs; *He is made of God to us, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption*: whole Chriſt is thine, Chriſt and all that he hath done, Chriſt and all that he hath ſuffered, Chriſt in his Perſon and in his Portion, thou maieſt ſay of him with the Spouſe, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

3. If God be thine, then is his Spirit thine, to lead thee into all Truth, the Comforter to abide with thee, the Spirit of Grace to ſanctifie thee; the Witneſs to teſtifie thy Sonſhip to God, and to ſeal thee unto the day of Redemption; this Spirit is thine if God be thine.

4. If God be thine, then is his Kingdom thine, his Glory thine, *Tis your Fathers good pleaſure to give you the*

the Kingdom, a Glorious *Kingdom*, *whose builder and founder is God*; *an Inheritance incorruptible*, *undefiled*, *that fadeth not away*, *reserved in Heaven for you*: such as can call God theirs, shall be sure one day to Reign with their God in the Kingdom of his Glory.

Proceed we to the second Observation from the words, which was this.

2. There is enough in God to encourage a Believer, when greatly distressed. 'Tis clear from this instance of *David*, he was *greatly distressed*, as you have heard, yet, *he encouraged himself in his God*. Follow him from hence to the 23. *Psal.* the 4. ver. and there you may find him insulting over the greatest of troubles, through his strong confidence in God; *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Unto this instance of *David*, we may add another like it, *Hab.*3.17, 18. *Although the Figtree shall not blossome, neither shall fruit be in the Vine, the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yeeld no meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no Herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* Though he should lose his pleasant and delightsome things; the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vine, though he should lose his necessary things; the Fields shall yeeld no meat, and there be neither Flocks in the fold, nor Herd in the stall, yet he knows where to find comfort, I will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.

In the pursuit of this Truth, I shall touch at some things in God, wherein lyes a Beleivers encouragement, and so close with a word or two of Application.

Now

Now there are theſe things in God for a ſouls encouragement in the midſt of troubles.

1. His preſence with them in their troubles and diſtreſſes. This was *Davids* encouragement, *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the vally of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me*: I have the preſence of God, he is my companion in my diſtreſs. O 'tis an encouragement to a Chriſtian, to have God preſent with him in his troubles; though friends leave him, and acquaintance forſake him, yet he is not alone, for God is with him, and he is the beſt companion in the world, *Pſal.* 91. 15. *He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him; I will be with him in trouble*: O this is a precious promiſe, it takes away all the bitterneſs of troubles, to have God preſent with us in trouble, it ſweetneth the bitter Cup, and makes it go down eaſily. I am diſtreſſed, may the ſoul ſay; O but I have more of Gods preſence, more communion and fellowſhip with him now than ever; this is an encouragement, when the eye of Faith beholds God preſent in the time of trouble: God is every where preſent; we may ſay to our comfort, *Whither ſhall we go from thy preſence?* yea, Who can drive us from thy preſence? If we be caſt upon a ſick-bed, thou art there, to make our bed in our ſickneſs; if we be ſhut up in Priſons, and dark Dungeons, the darkneſs hides not from thee, but the Night ſhines as the Day; if we be baniſhed into the uttermoſt parts of the Earth, even there ſhall thy Hand lead us, and thy Right Hand guide us.

The comfort a Believer hath from this preſence of God with him, brancheth forth it ſelf into theſe two or three things.

1. Here is counſel and direction at hand. 'Tis an encouragement to a man, to have a Wiſe Friend at hand, of whom he may ask counſel in matters difficult:

How much more to have God at hand to conſult, who is wonderful in counſel: The Believer that hath God preſent with him, may conſult him in all his ſtraits, and may have advice from him.

2. By this preſence of God, the burden is made lighter; God will lift at the heavy end, and this is a great encouragement; 'tis ſad to be left to bear the burthen of affliction alone, but when God puts to his ſhoulder, it becomes more tolerable, *Pſal.* 55. 22. *Caſt thy burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee, he ſhall never ſuffer the Righteous to be moved.* O what a comfort it is to have God preſent with us, upon whom we may roul our burden, when our ſhoulder is ready to faint under it!

3. From this preſence of God with a Believer there ariſeth joy in trouble; a merry heart in the midſt of diſtreſs. There's great joy in communion with God, be our outward condition what it will: God's preſence makes Heaven where-ever it comes, though the place be a Priſon, yea though it were Hell it ſelf. *Pſal.* 16. 11. *In thy Preſence is fulneſs of Joy.*

2. His Wiſdom in bringing good out of all troubles and diſtreſſes. This is another thing in God wherein a Believer may encourage himſelf; God who is with him, is God only wiſe, a God of infinite Wiſdom; he knows how to bring good out of evil, honey out of the eater. *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God*; All things, even ſufferings, troubles and diſtreſſes. But how comes this about? Not from themſelves, and of their own nature, but by the Wiſdom of God. The ſoul may ſay, Here's a bitter cup, full of much poyſon, given me to drink; but I know it will prove healthful unto me, becauſe it comes from the hand of a skilful Phyſician, that kills the poyſon, and corrects the nature of the unwholſom Drugs.

Drugs. Believers may ſay of their troubles, and of the inſtruments of them, as *Joſeph* to his brethren, *You thought evil, but God meant it for good:* So our enemies, they intend our hurt and our ruine, but the wiſe God means it for our good. A Believer may encourage himſelf in this wiſe God, who can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkneſs.

There are two Branches of Comfort which grow upon this root, the Wiſdom of God.

1. He is tranſcendently wiſe above all his and our enemies; though Satan and his agents be very ſubtile and crafty, yet they are not infinitely wiſe, as God is. He is able to out-wit them all; he laughs at the plots and contrivances of the ungodly, and counts them fooliſhneſs; Job 5.13. *He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs*; when they imagine themſelves to be ſafe in the Caſtle of their own wiſdom, God enſnares them by a greater Policy, as the Hunter enſnares the Wild-beaſt.

2. This wiſe God is able to make a *Believer* wiſe, and He will do it. He is able to give the wiſdom of the Serpent, to ſuch as have the Doves Innocency. Jam. 1.5. *If any of you lack Wiſdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* Our God is a treaſury of Wiſdom, out of which we may fetch ſupplies when we want. Thus Believers have encouragement from the Wiſdom of God, in a time of diſtreſs and trouble.

3. Another thing in God, whereby the ſoul is encouraged in diſtreſs, is his Power, his Omnipotency, and Strength; as he is wiſe, ſo he is ſtrong, able to effect and bring to paſs all the contrivances of his Wiſdom; a Believer may betake himſelf to everlaſting ſtrength, and there find encouragement. Prov. 18.10. *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower, the Righteous*

runneth into it, and is safe. God is a Tower of ſtrength; the Arms of Omnipotency are a good defence, the Righteous are ſafe there, nothing can hurt them there. Pſal. 46. 1,2. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a preſent help in time of trouble; therefore will we not fear though the Earth be removed, and the Mountains carried into the midſt of the Sea.* See how the Church encourageth her ſelf in the Strength and Power of God, even beyond all fear; come what will, we have a refuge to betake us to. *Iſa.* 26. 4. *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting Strength,* ſuch Strength as can never faile. Oh how may a Believer glory, when he is incloſed within ſuch Walls; though he be compaſſed about with troubles, yet his comfort is, that everlaſting Strength is engaged for him.

There is a threefold Comfort in this general Encouragement.

1. This Power is ſufficient for our deliverance, be our diſtreſſes what they will: though Believers may have many enemies, yet God that is on their ſide, is able to ſave them; He is greater than all. In this the three un-martyred Martyrs encouraged themſelves againſt the burning rage of an angry King, and his fiery Fornace: *Dan.* 3. 17. *Our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Fornace:* The proud Heathen cries, *Who is that God that ſhall deliver you out of my hands?* Who, why the God that made Heaven and Earth, the living God, he can deliver us. The Believer knows that the powerful God is able to ſave him: It was He that ſhut the hungry Lyons mouths, and ſaved *Daniel* in the Den: It was He that filed off *Peters* Chains, and threw open the Iron-gate, that he might eſcape: He hath wrought Miracles for the deliverance of ſuch as have truſted in him.

2. All the power and ſtrength the enemy hath, comes

comes from God, and is limited by him; the Devils themſelves are led up and down in Chains by the hand of providence: So that if the Believer be frighted by hearing the Lyon roar, he is again encouraged by the gingling of the Chain; he cannot fix a ſcab upon our body, without a licence from God, as appears in *Job's* ſtory. Our God hath his hook in the noſe of the chief of our enemies; he cannot go whither he would, nor do what he pleaſeth: and ſo wicked men, who are Satans inſtruments, they have their power from God, *John* 19. 10, 11. *Pilate* boaſteth of his power to releaſe, or to crucifie Chriſt; Jeſus anſwers, *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above.* But,

3. From this Power and Strength the Believer receives ſtrength to undergo his burthen: 'tis a ſtrong God that makes patient ſufferers: a heavy burthen upon weak ſhoulders, will make ill work; but when the ſhoulder is made ſtrong by ſtrength from above, then it can bear the burthen better. Pſal. 138. 3. *In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.* Believers count themſelves to be ſtrong in the Lord, and the power of his might, when in themſelves they are low and weak through trouble and diſtreſs; 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake; for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.*

4. The laſt thing I ſhall name (in God) whereby the Believer encourageth himſelf in his diſtreſs, is the *Faithfulneſs* of God; we have a God to go to in our troubles, that never was known to faile any that came to him after a due manner: He is a God of Truth, keeping Covenant and Mercy; whatſoever Promiſe he hath made to his People in troubles, he will be ſure

to make all good; *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but his Word ſhall not paſs away.* God in very faithfulneſs doth afflict, when he ſees 'tis needful, and he is faithful in over-ruling all our afflictions; 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* We may encourage our ſelves in the true and faithful God; *He is faithful that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it*: Theſe things principally there are in God, wherein the Believer may encourage himſelf, when he is in trouble and diſtreſs. For Application.

1. This gives a check to the immoderate fearfulneſs of Chriſtians, who are ready to run out of God's Way to avoid troubles, and are ready to cry out, they are undone, they ſhall periſh by the hands of theſe enemies; whereas they ought not to be diſmayed with their own folly and weakneſs, but to encourage themſelves in the Power and Wiſdom of God: What ails thee, O Chriſtian, that thou art more afraid of man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, than of God that giveth life, and breath, and all things? *Think not the Lord's hand is ſhortned, that it cannot help; or his arm weakned, that it cannot ſave.*

2. We ſee the vanity of the wicked man's confidence, he encourageth himſelf in that which cannot ſave him, but will vaniſh when he hath moſt need of it; he encourageth himſelf in his ſinful wayes, in his own wiſdom, & leans to his own underſtanding; he encourageth himſelf in the arm of fleſh, but he hath no God to encourage himſelf in; he is without God in the world, God is not in all his thoughts, there's nothing below God, and an intereſt in him, wherein the ſoul can find encouragement; therefore 'tis that the wicked are ſo often at their wits end, when they are in diſtreſs; they

they have nothing to encourage themſelves in, when once their refuge of lies is ſwept away, and their agreement with Hell is come to nothing.

3. We are hence exhorted in all our troubles and diſtreſſes, ſtill to encourage our ſelves in the Lord our God, in his Preſence, in his Wiſdom, in his Power, and in his Faithfulneſs, let us ſtay our ſelves upon theſe things; God is the ſame now as he was in former Ages; he will be the ſame to thee as he was to *David*, to *Habakkuk*, to the three Children, to *Daniel*, to *Peter*; therefore let the thoughts of God, and the Comforts that are in God, ſtay up, and delight your ſouls; every thing that is good is contained in that Name; let nothing amaze you, ſo long as you have ſuch a God to fly unto; your condition may be low and ſad, but is it worſe than *David's* was at this time? therefore do as he did, and for your direction take with you theſe two things.

1. Be ſure that the Lord be your God, otherwiſe you cannot encourage your ſelves in him: A man cannot rejoyce in an Eſtate which is not his own, or in a great Man in whom he hath no intereſt; be ſure then to get an intereſt in God; he gives no encouragement to ſtrangers; he is a conſuming Fire to his enemies; but to his Children and Servants, he is a ſure Defence. Get near to God by the Blood of Chriſt, beg of Him to take you into his Family, amongſt his adopted Sons and Daughters: when thou canſt with *David* call God thy God, then mayeſt thou alſo encourage thy ſelf in Him.

2. Keep thy Evidences of an intereſt in God clear, the Teſtimony of the holy Ghoſt witneſſing thy Saintſhip; keep cloſe to God, forſake him not, leſt he caſt thee off for ever; fear to diſpleaſe God, leſt he hide his face from thee; keep up communion and acquaintance with

him, and ſo in all thy troubles and diſtreſſes, thou maiſt encourage thy ſelf in the Lord thy God.

SERMON VIII.

by Sam.l Shaw. Long Whatton Leiceſter.e

Phil. 1. 12.

Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι ἀδελφοὶ ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν.

But I would ye ſhould underſtand, Brethren, that the things which happened to me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Goſpel.

THis verſe begins the body of the Epiſtle, and ſeems to contain the Cauſe or Reaſon why the Apoſtle wrote this Epiſtle, *viz.* to let them know his ſtate, and the ſtate of the Goſpel at *Rome*; whereas the *Philippians* might be apt to think that the Goſpel had loſt ground, and ſuſtained damage by the impriſonment of the Apoſtle; he writes purpoſely (as it ſeems) to certifie them the contrary; *I would ye ſhould underſtand, Brethren, that the things which hapned to me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

The terms of the Text require a word or two to be ſpoken to them by way of *Explication*.

The things, τὰ] theſe τὰ were afflictions, troubles, which he underwent; particularly, Reſtraint, Impriſonment.

Happened] This is added by the Tranſlators, to perfect the ſence, but perhaps not ſo properly as an other word might have been: yet it may paſs well enough, if we take care to exclude chance or fortune. Theſe things did not ſo happen to the Apoſtle, as though God had not directed, ordered, ſent them. τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ,

quæ

quæ ſecundum me, or, *circa me*; the things that befel me.

Fallen out] The word is, ἐλήλυθε, and ſignifies, *Came*: It ſeems to import that they came on purpoſe from the hand of God for this end, they were ſent on this errand, directed to this iſſue.

The Furtherance] is well tranſlated; not furthering *actively*, but *neutrally*, *proceſſus progreſſus*, the progreſs, advantage, improvement of the Goſpel. Theſe things could not ſo properly be ſaid to be, εἰς προκοπὴν, in an active ſence, active furtherers or promoters, as neutrally, they were an occaſion of its *being* furthered.

Of the Goſpel] I ſuppoſe is properly of the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*, which was ſpread by this occaſion; as the following words do expound.

There are four Heads in the words;

1. That *Troubles, Afflictions hapned to Paul.*

2. It is implied, that, *Theſe things were in themſelves moſt likely to hinder the Goſpel.*

3. That *yet they fell out to the contrary, even to the furtherance of it.*

4. That *the Apoſtle deſires to let his Philippians to know thus much.*

1. That *Troubles, Afflictions, particularly, Impriſonment, happened to the Apoſtle Paul.*

That *Paul* was now in bonds at *Rome*, that he lived two years a priſoner *in his own hired houſe*, is beyond diſpute. But concerning the Cauſes of his being ſet at liberty, what he did when he was at liberty, whether he went into *Spain* after, or how long he lived after, or how he came to be impriſoned a ſecond time, where, when, and how he dyed, I will not trouble you with the uncertain, and indeed contrary reports and conjectures of Hiſtorians: It is enough for my purpoſe that he was now in priſon for the Goſpel. This hath

hath been the common entertainment, the ordinary uſage of the Prophets and Meſſengers of God; As I might ſhew you out of the Hiſtory of the life of *Michaiah*, *Hanani*, *Jeremiah*, *John* Baptiſt, and the Apoſtles generally, according as was propheſied to them, *Luk.*21.12. *They ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you, delivering you up to the Synagogues, and into Priſons.*

2. It is implied here, that *this impriſonment, this reſtraint of the Apoſtle, was in its own nature moſt likely to hinder the Goſpel.* So thought the Rulers of the Jews, *Act.*4.17. *That it ſpread no further, let us* reſtrain them, tie their tongues, *ſtraightly threaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this Name.* And indeed, if the Churches reſt, and the liberty of her Miniſters do conduce to its edification and multiplication, *Acts* 9.31. then her Perſecutions, and the Reſtraint of her Miniſters, muſt in its own nature tend to the ſtraitning and hindring of the Goſpel; this needs no proof: To oppreſs the Preachers of the Goſpel, is to ſuppreſs the Goſpel that they preach. This the Apoſtle plainly ſuppoſes here; this he knew, and therefore would have them to know, that through God's infinite goodneſs and wiſdom, it had fallen out otherwiſe in his caſe. This was the reaſon that he ſo much deſired to let them underſtand how things had fallen out.

3. That *thoſe things fell out not only to the not hindering, but even to the furthering of the Goſpel.* Now that I may have the more liberty to proſecute the matter couched under this Obſervation, I ſhall put it into more general terms, and lay down this Point or *Propoſition*, That

The reſtraining of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, doth ſometimes fall out to the furthering of the Goſpel. I retain the word [*fall out*] to intimate, that it is beſides the nature of Reſtraint to further the Goſpel. And

thus

thus the three firſt Obſervations are contracted into one. This Propoſition I ſhall come down to by three ſteps or degrees. I ſhall premiſe three things that have an affinity to the Propoſition that I have laid down.

1. That *the oppreſſing and afflicting of the Church of God, doth frequently fall out to the encreaſe, enlargement, and multiplication of it.* True indeed, when the Church had reſt, it multiplied, *Acts* 9. 31. But even under the greateſt diſtreſs and trouble, it multiplies too. The babes of *Iſrael* were not *leſſened*, although they were *killed*, nor made the *fewer*, by the drowning of *many*. A miracle yet again made good in the ſpiritual Off-ſpring of the Church, whoſe Children ſpring up even from the Aſhes of the dead; According to that, *Sanguis Martyrum Semen Eccleſiæ*, The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church. The Church of God, ſo oft compared to a Woman, makes good the Obſervation of Phyſicians, ſhe never brings forth, either more children, or with more eaſe, than when ſhe undergoes the moſt hardſhip: The greater the *labour*, the eaſier the *travel*. The Church of the *Jews* multiplied more in *Pharoah's* Brick-kills, than they would have done in his Court: they were fatter with gathering ſtubble, than the *Egyptians* were by reaping the Corn. The Church of Chriſtians grew up to a miracle, under the ten *Roman* Perſecutions. And even in our own Church of *England*, in the dayes of Queen *Maryes* Reign, it is obſerved, that there grew up more good Members, than afterwards when it had a better Head: As if the Church, like the Poet's *Hydra*, had been ſtrengthned by her falls. This is the ſingular goodneſs of God to his People, in bleſſing them where no hope is; and his remarkable Judgement upon the Wicked, their Oppreſſors, in making void their great hopes, and fruſtrating their wicked works, by making his

his Church the true *Palm*-tree; *Quæ ſub pondere creſcit*, The more load you lay on, the leſs they feel it: Nay, inſtead of *groaning* under it, they *grow* under it. So that it ſeems, that Promiſe made to the Church, Mat. 16. 18. *The gates of Hell ſhall not prevail*, is a *meioſis*: They ſhall not only not prevail againſt it, but it ſhall even prevail againſt them. That Promiſe in *Mark* 10. 30. is not made good only to the Children of God in their comforts, but even to the Church of God in its Children, *an hundred fold with perſecution*. I know not what power there is in ſufferings, over the ſpirits of men, but I believe it may be ſaid of ſome Martyrs, (as of *Sampſon*, that he killed, ſo) that they have converted more at their death, than in their lives. The Book of Martyrs is not wanting in examples of that kind. And as their ſufferings work by way of *affecting*, ſo their courage and conſtancy in ſuffering, work by way of *convincing*, convinces the very Adverſary of the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of their cauſe. All men will wonder, and judge it a ſtrong deluſion indeed, if men ſhould adventure to dye for Humour or Fancy. However, though the way how it comes to paſs is not ſo clear, yet the thing is undeniable; And when we have done our beſt to find out the reaſons of it, yet the Hand, the extraordinary Hand of God muſt be owned, and confeſſed to be in it.

2. That *the afflictions that are upon a Believer, do alwayes fall out to his advantage.*

1. *To the advantage of his comforts.* *Tribulation* doth at ſome diſtance *work Hope*, Rom. 5. 3, 4. Now Hope is accompanied with great Conſolation. Believers are bidden to *rejoyce*, when they are *made partakers of Chriſts ſufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 13. And to *count it all joy*, when they *fall into divers temptations*, Jam. 1. 2. And ſure I am, the Children of God have found by experience,

perience, that as God hath encreaſed their Afflictions, ſo he hath ſenſibly multiplied their Comforts; which (ſayes Dr. *Preſton* ſomewhere) is the meaning of that Promiſe, *Mark* 10. 30. they ſhall *receive an hundred fold with Perſecutions*: *i. e.* the more their Tryals abound, the more their Comforts ſhall abound. It is ordinary with our gracious God, to make up outward and temporal loſſes, with inward and ſpiritual ſupplies; and to recompence outward trouble and affliction with inward refreſhings and conſolations. He uſually appeareth moſt to his People, when the world, and the good things thereof are leaſt in ſight. Though he may ſeem to ſpeak roughly to them many times by his providences (as *Joſeph* to his brethren) yet at the ſame time he puts corn into their ſacks, comfort into their ſouls; yea, and that ſo much the more comfort too, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. — *as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.*

2. To the advantage of their Graces. Theſe God exerciſeth, confirmeth, and enlargeth by afflictions. *Tribulation worketh Patience, Patience Experience, Experience Hope*, Rom. 5. 3. by this, luſt comes to be purged out, (*Pſa.* 116. 67.) Temptations reſiſted, Sin prevented, Duty performed, Earth deſpiſed, Heaven deſired, Self denied, and Chriſt Exalted. The enemies of God's People hack and hew them by oppreſſion, reproaches, perſecutions: Why this doth but furbiſh their Graces, ſquare and fit them to be a ſpiritual building unto God. The Devil tempts them, to deſtroy and damn them: And hereby they are brought nearer to God, ſet upon the greater watchfulneſs, gain the better experience, and are brought into an higher eſteem of the blood of Chriſt. Afflictions do one way or other, fall out to the advantage of a Believers Graces.

3. *To*

3. *To the advantage of their Glory.* Though God do not properly reward men for their ſuffering; yet happily it may be ſaid, he will reward according to their ſufferings. If we ſuffer with Chriſt, we ſhall reign with him, ſaith the Scripture: and it ſeems that according to degrees of ſufferings, God will give degrees of Glory. *What ſhall we have,* ſays *Peter* (that have ſuffered ſuch things) *that have forſaken all and followed thee? verily,* ſays our Saviour, *every one that hath forſaken houſes, &c. ſhall receive an hundred-fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life:* but *ye ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael,* Matt. 19. 27, 28, 29. It will not repent thee, Chriſtian, of thy low, mean, deſpiſed, afflicted condition in the world, when every affliction thou haſt ſuffered for Chriſt, ſhall be as a Sparkling-Jewel to give a luſter to thy Crown of Glory. Doubtleſs, if there be degrees of Glory, (as we have reaſon to conclude there are) Gods ſuffering Servants, and amongſt them eſpecially his Martyrs, ſhall ſit down in the chiefeſt Manſions, and the higheſt Rooms in the Kingdom.

3. *That the ſufferings of Gods Miniſters (in the general) do many times fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel.* Here are two things that I might ſpeak to.

1. *Afflictions make them the better Chriſtians.* It may be that through great intentneſs upon publick adminiſtrations, and conſtant cares and pains in feeding the Flock, the Shepherds may ſometimes have neglected themſelves, and the ſtate of their own ſouls; It may be they may not have ſtudyed their own hearts, nor attended the particular concernments of their own ſouls ſo as they might have done: as though one ſhould ſay in *Solomons words* (whether it be the direct meaning

meaning of them, I do not ſay) *Cant.* 1. 6. *They have made me keeper of the Vineyard, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* And it may ſeem good to God, by afflictions to bring them home, to ſet them a task to do in their own hearts, to quicken them to the ſtudy of their own ſouls.

2. *Affliction makes them the better Miniſters*: And that will be for the advantage of the Goſpel. No ſuch Miniſters as they that are train'd up in the ſchool of affliction. *It was meet*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that the Captain of our ſalvation ſhould be made perfect through ſufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. And indeed, (to allude to that) even theſe Captains in the Church-militant, even our Miniſters, are much perfected and qualified for their work by ſufferings. How ſhall he be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of others, who is not tempted as they are? to allude to the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 4. 15. Spiritual afflictions, conflicts, temptation do excellently qualifie a Miniſter of the Goſpel, and enable him to comfort the afflicted, ſuccour the tempted, ſtrengthen the weak, anſwer objections, reſolve doubts, and to reſcue from Satan thoſe that are taken captive by him. And troubles from without, theſe do alſo through the bleſſing of God, and the Spirit of God ſanctifying them, make the better Miniſters too. Who can inſtruct unto Faith, and Patience, and Hope, better than they, whoſe condition in the world hath long called them to the exerciſe of them? Who can ſpeak with more weight and power concerning the things of Heaven, and the World to come, than they that by long ſufferings are become crucified to this preſent world? Who ſhall better, or more effectually perſwade to the hatred of ſin, than they that have felt the ſmart of it; or to prize the blood of Chriſt and the promiſes of God, than they who have largely taſted

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the ſweetneſs of them? How excellently will all that lazineſs, coldneſs, worldlineſs that is apt to overgrow us in a time of proſperity, be ſcoured off by afflictions, if God ſanctifie them! And then behold what zealous, induſtrious, heavenly, ſerious Miniſters ſhall be ſeen coming out of the Fornace!

Here I might deſcend to particulars, and ſhew you how (by the goodneſs of God, and his wiſe ordering) the particular afflictions that happen to the faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel, do fall out many times to the furtherance of the Goſpel. *Darius* uſed to ſay, his *poor Souldiers* were his *beſt Souldiers*. Whether *Chriſt Jeſus* will ſay ſo or no, I know not; but ſure I am, he hath ſaid, that his Souldiers ſhould not *entangle* themſelves *with the affairs of this life*, 2 Tim. 2. 4. And experience teacheth us, that it is a hard thing to have high and rich concernments in the world, and not to be entangled by them.

As for *Reproaches*, they have ordinarily this effect upon a good heart, to make more hardy, valiant, watchful: For though our enemies do not alwayes tell us truly, what we are, or what we have done, (when they reproach us) yet they tell us, what we may be, or may do, if we take not heed.

Baniſhment is either from a *particular Congregation*, or from *a more general place*, as ſuppoſe a Kingdom or Nation. Theſe both ſometimes fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel. There are ſome that will bear witneſs with all thankfulneſs, that God hath bleſſed the *Baniſhment* or forceable removal of ſome Miniſters from their own Congregations (and that not long ſince) to be a means of carrying the Goſpel to dark corners of the Kingdom, to Congregations whom no one cared for, to Sheep that had no Shepherd. Many a poor ſoul (I doubt not) hath cauſe to bleſs God, for the

the ſpoils of other Churches. Concerning the latter kind of *Baniſhment* I need not tell you, how it hath become a means to tranſport the treaſure of the Goſpel into other Lands; the Perſecution and Diſperſion of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts from *Jeruſalem*, doth ſo abundantly teſtifie it. It was well for the world that our Saviour gave that Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, *Matt.* 10. 23. That when they were Perſecuted in one City they might flee to another: for ſo it hath come to paſſe that (as the Sun, ſo) the Light of the Goſpel, ſetting in one part of the world, hath riſen to give light to others.

And this brings me down to the Propoſition it ſelf directly contained in the Text, that, *The reſtraint of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, doth ſometimes fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel.* Now the reſtraint of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, is twofold, either Perſonal, (that we call *Confinement* or *Impriſonment*) or *Miniſterial*, that is *Suſpenſion* or *Silencing*. The furtherance of the Goſpel is twofold alſo, either the furtherance of the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*, or the *Intereſt of the Goſpel*. Now both theſe kinds of reſtraints, God can make to fall out to both theſe kinds of furthering of the Goſpel.

1. The *Confinement* of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, doth ſometimes fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel: And that, 1. *Of the Doctrine of the Goſpel*; and that by theſe wayes;

1. *It ſtirrs up the world to make enquiry into the cauſe why Miniſters lye in Bonds:* And ſo the knowledge of that way is encreaſed, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel ſpread. Men, as men, are led by common compaſſion, to deſire to underſtand the grounds of mens ſufferings: And beſides that, if there were no ingredient at all of compaſſion, yet the nature of man is curious and inquiſitive. And indeed the nature of Juſtice, and

Government is ſuch, that it cannot long ſuffer the Crime of a perſon under bonds to be concealed. By this means the ſufferings, eſpecially the Impriſonment of the Apoſtles, carried the Doctrine of the Goſpel to many places where the Apoſtles themſelves never came, nor perhaps could come; for although they were commanded to go from City to City, yet fame would go faſter and further too, than they could go. It is a very effectual way to propagate the knowledge of any way, even that the moſt eminent propugnators of it, ſhould lie in bonds for the defence of it. It fell out thus in the Apoſtle *Pauls* caſe here, as he himſelf explains himſelf in the verſe next following my Text, *So that my Bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the Palace, and in all other places. My Bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt*] that is, the cauſe of my Bonds, the reaſon of my Impriſonment is come abroad, and ſo the Goſpel is ſpread. It were no hard thing to give inſtances amongſt our ſelves, (and that not long ſince) how the perſon and way, or cauſe of Miniſters have become famous and notorious by this means, which otherwiſe would have been more obſcure. But,

2. This Reſtraint falls out to the furtherance of the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*, in that *it ſtirs up others, ſeeing the neceſſities of the Church, and having compaſſion on it, to put their Sickle into the Lords Harveſt, and to draw forth their breaſts to the fainting Flocks of God:* And ſo perhaps the Church gets two for one, or an eminent guide in the room of a meaner. It is expreſly ſaid, once and again, that *after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God, Mat.* 4. 12. *Mar.* 1. 14. Our bleſſed Saviour took that occaſion to enter ſolemnly upon his Miniſtry. And it ſeems, by the Apoſtle *Pauls* Impriſonment, Preachers were multiplyed: Though ſome indeed preach'd Chriſt

Chriſt out of envy and ſtrife, yet others out of good will, *ver.* 15.

3. *It quickens others who are imploy'd in the ſame work, to diſcharge it with more diligence and boldneſs.* This is ſtrange indeed to the eye of reaſon, that the ſufferings of ſome ſhould make others not fear to ſuffer: yet ſo God hath brought it to paſs. So it fell out in the Apoſtles caſe here, *ver.* 14. *Many of the Brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the Word without fear. Waxing confident by my bonds*; that is, by the courage, conſtancy and patience which I ſhew in my Bonds. The Apoſtles Bonds were an occaſion of manifeſting his Courage, and his Courage encouraged many; —*many of the Brethren are much more confident to ſpeak.* And indeed, one would almoſt envy the incomes of God and his Spirit, upon the Priſoners of the Goſpel, and purchaſe thoſe ſpiritual Enlargements with corporal Reſtraints.

4. *When God ſhall have enlarged them, the conſideration of their Reſtraint will quicken them to greater pains, care and faithfulneſs:* Oh how will they then labour to fullfil their Miniſtry, which formerly perhaps they had been more remiſs in! this evil befalling them, will make them the more induſtrious to do the more good. God can alſo enlarge the hearts of their People to receive them the more gladly, and their Doctrine the more readily. How welcome do ye think a Miniſter riſing from the dead, would be to a people, formerly it may be ungrateful to him? Why ſome degree at leaſt of ſuch welcome, may a Miniſter returning out of Priſon find. Abſence doth uſually endear things unto us. And why may not God make their Impriſonment to endear them and their Miniſtry too, to their People? This ſome of the Priſoners of the Goſpel have found.

2. The *Confinement* of the Miniſters of the Goſpel,

doth ſometimes fall out to the furtherance of the *intereſt of the Goſpel*; I mean, the cauſe of Religion, the Work of Grace, the power of Godlineſs. And that by theſe wayes amongſt others;

1. *It is an occaſion of exerciſing the Charity of God's People.* We need not go far to prove, that in times of proſperity, and univerſal reſt, even Profeſſors themſelves, are apt to ſettle themſelves upon their worldly concernments, to grow earthly minded, and to ſully themſelves too much with the dirty commodities of the world. And the Miniſters of Chriſt do find the Prophecy of their Lord made good by their own experience, that *the love of many ſhall waxcold.* And indeed in times of proſperity and liberty, there ſeems not to be ſuch need of the Manifeſtations of Charity, and the Expreſſions of Affections, as in times of Confinement. By this therefore doth God try the diſpoſitions of Profeſſors towards their Miniſters, that have ſpent, and been ſpent amongſt them, and draw forth the bowels of compaſſion towards them. Our Apoſtle's preſent condition at *Rome*, was an occaſion of exerciſing the *Philippians* Charity towards him; even then their care of him flouriſhed, *Phil.* 4. 10. This the Apoſtle rejoyces in, not ſo much, becauſe it was a ſupply of his wants, as becauſe it was an exerciſe of their Grace, and would abound to their account, knowing that God would ſupply their needs, in as much as they had ſupplied his, *ver.* 17. 18, 19.

2. *It is a ſingular occaſion of quickning the People of God to prayer:* And in prayer, the exerciſings of Repentance, Faith, Hope, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, are eminently ſeen. It was ſometimes propheſied concerning Chriſt the great Shepherd, *I will ſmite the Shepherd, and the Sheep ſhall be ſcattered*, Zech. 13. 7. And ſo it was indeed: but it many times falls out otherwiſe

therwiſe in the ſmiting of the Miniſters of the Goſpel thoſe inferiour Shepherds, for thereby the Sheep are *gathered*, I mean gathered to Prayer, gathered to ſeek God. Thus you know they were *gathered together*, for *Peter*, when he was in priſon, *Acts* 12. 5. and *ver.* 12. *Many were gathered together at the houſe of Mary, praying.* This the Apoſtle *Paul* calls for from his *Philippians*, *ver.* 19. of this chapter: and from the *Jews*, *Heb.* 13. 19. *Pray for us the rather, that I may be reſtored unto you the ſooner*: for the Apoſtle was even then a Priſoner at *Rome*, as the moſt judicious Commentators do conceive. It may be the prayers which were wanting for the preſervation, will be abundantly poured out for the reſtauration of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; and this I do account is highly for the advantage of the intereſt of the Goſpel: There is certainly no great evil towards us, ſo long as the prayers of God's People are well maintained: and indeed, I ſee not how any good thing can be long kept out, where Prayer, fervent faithful Prayer, is kept up.

3. *It confirms the courage of the People of God* (that are ſo indeed) when they ſee their Miniſters lye for the defence of the Goſpel: it conduces much to their ſettlement in the Truth, and encouragement in their Profeſſion.

4. *It ſerves to the uniting of the People of God, and the keeping up of union and communion amongſt them.* Now, if ever, will *they that fear the Lord ſpeak often one to another*, even when he is removed, that ſhould ſpeak to them all. See how cloſe the Diſciples kept together, when their great Shepherd was removed, *Acts* 1. 14. and 2. 1. The like in ſome meaſure may follow amongſt the People of God, upon the removal of their Teachers into corners; and this will undoubtedly be to the furtherance of the intereſt of the Goſpel—*vis unita*

fortior, their combined powers will be impregnable.

So much for the *perſonal Reſtraint*, or *Confinement* of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and its falling out to the furtherance both of the Doctrine, and Intereſt of the Goſpel.

2. *Miniſterial Reſtraint*; that is, *Suſpenſion*, or *Silencing* the Miniſters of the Goſpel. This doth alſo ſometimes fall out, and God can make it fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel. And that,

1. Of the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*. And that,

1. *By puting Chriſtians upon a more ſtrict enquiry into thoſe Points, Doctrines, or matters of Religion, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel are reſtrained for*; and ſo knowledge comes to be encreaſed, and the truth to be found out. Some have obſerved God's good ends in ſuffering errors to be broached in the Church; by that means the Truth hath been more narrowly look into, and more abundantly cleared. The erroneous Tenents, and corrupt uſages of the *Corinthians* about the *Lord's Supper*, fell out exceedingly to the furtherance of the Truth in that matter; the Apoſtle *Paul* taking occaſion from thence to write that eleventh Chapter of his firſt Epiſtle, by which we are more inſtructed in the Doctrine of that Sacrament, than in all the Scriptures beſides. Something like may be obſerved to have fallen out in this caſe that I am ſpeaking of. It is ſomething that they are ſuſpended for: And what is it? is it a ſufficient ground of ſuſpenſion, are the next enquiries? Inſtances for the confirmation of this, are not wanting in our own and other Churches. For you muſt not expect under this head of Suſpenſion, that I ſhould bring any Scripture-inſtances, of its falling out to the furtherance of the Goſpel. For I do not read of any ſuch reſtraint laid upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel in the Scripture. It might have been expected, that *Moſes* ſhould

ſhould have reſtrained thoſe that propheſied in the Camp, I mean *Eldad* and *Medad*. *Joſhua* indeed ſaid, *My Lord Moſes forbid them*. But *Moſes* thought there could not be too many Prophets in *Iſrael*, ſo that the Lord would but put his Spirit upon them. And as for *Joſhua*, it was nothing but zeal for his Maſters credit, that put him upon it, as appears, Numb. 11.29. *Moſes ſaid unto him, Envieſt thou for my ſake? Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets*, &c. It might have been expected, that *Paul* here at *Rome*, ſhould have ſhewed his Apoſtolical Authority at leaſt, and have forbidden them that preach'd Chriſt of envy and contention; but he was glad however, that Chriſt was preached, *Phil.* 1. 18. But above all, it might have been expected, that our Saviour Chriſt ſhould have forbidden him that caſt out Devils, in his Name indeed, but was not of his company; he did a good thing indeed, but he did it diſorderly, he followed not him. The Apoſtles indeed would have had it ſo, *But Jeſus ſaid, forbid him not*, *Mark* 9.38, 39. But if any man will ſhew me any Scripture-inſtance of reſtraining the Miniſters of the Goſpel, I doubt not but to ſhew him in it, an inſtance of ſuch reſtraint falling out to the furtherance of the Goſpel.

2. Such miniſterial Reſtraint doth fall out to the furtherance of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, in that *it gives the more occaſion to, and layes the greater neceſſity on Chriſtians to reade the Scriptures and other good Books*. That's evident. Now by this means Profeſſors come to have good Judgement as well as good Affections, and knowledge to their former zeal. I am loth to ſpeak here, leſt I ſhould be thought to offend againſt any of the generation of the Juſt: But I pray God to ſanctifie the reading of the Scriptures and other good Books, to this end, That as Preaching hath made forward Profeſſors,

and drawn forth affections, to reading may make them ſolid Chriſtians, and ſettle their Judgments in the Truth.

3. *It ought to open the mouths of private Chriſtians, to diſcourſe the things of the Goſpel*, to declare to their neighbours the things of God, and inſtruct and edifie one another in Soul-concernments. And if they by this means ſhall be brought to preach to their neighbours; I mean not that they ſhould uſurp the Miniſterial Function, not called thereunto; but by Godly Converſation and Communication. As *David* preach'd in the 66. *Pſal. ver.* 16. *Come and hear, and I will declare what God hath done for my ſoul.* If it ſhall be thus, and that inſtead of one *Miniſterial* Preacher, there ſhall be many *Charitative* Preachers in a town, then I doubt not but it may fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel. And thus I beſeech you, Chriſtian Friends, let it be. Declare the great things of the Goſpel in the way in which you may: do it now if ever. But leſt I ſhould be thought to preach faction, it's good I think, to ſhew my Authority: It is that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 10.25. *Not forſaking the Aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching.*

4. This Miniſterial Reſtraint may fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, *in giving occaſion and opportunity to the perſons ſo reſtrained, to furniſh themſelves better for the work of the Miniſtry.* Who knows, but that God may take ſome off, from laying out, that they may the better lay in, lay in ſtock, lay up ſtore, make proviſion; and then call them forth again to the Churches greater advantage, when they ſhall return far more richly leaden than before. Nay, who knows, but that ſome conſtitutions almoſt waſted, ſome ſpirits almoſt ſpent, do require ſome ceſſation? and God is pleaſed

to

to give a nights reſt to his labourers, that they may hold out the longer, and the better in his Service: As the husbandman givs a fallow year to his Land, not becauſe he would not have Corn, but that he may have ſo much the more: So here, that it may be to the *furtherance of the Goſpel*. They *depart for a ſeaſon*, that their People may receive them, and enjoy them the longer.

2. Miniſterial Reſtraint, or the ſuſpenſion of the Miniſters of the Goſpel from their Miniſtry, doth ſometimes fall out; and God can make it fall out to the furtherance of the *intereſt of the Goſpel*, and that by ſuch wayes as theſe.

1. *In making the Goſpel to be valued, and more dearly eſteemed by Profeſſors*, who perhaps began to look upon it with too common an eye, and to grow ſecure, cold, and wanton under it. When the meat ſhall be taken away, and the ſurfet cured, and the ſtomack reſtored, then, Oh then, welcome any wholſome meat! The Word of the Lord will be precious in thoſe dayes. And not only in making the Goſpel to be more valued by Profeſſors, but alſo deſired by others, that till then never knew the worth of it. If God ſend a famine of hearing the Word, it will make men *run to and fro to ſeek it*, Amos 8. 11, 12. nay, perhaps make them run, that never found their legs before. The very want of the means and ordinances of converſion, may be a means ordained of God, for the converting of ſome, or at leaſt for the preparing of them for Converſion. I may add under this head too, that it may fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, by making the Miniſters of the Goſpel more prized. Their Reſtraint may well conduce to this end, *Virtutem incolumen odimus, ſublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi*, good men grow precious cous by their abſence. It may be proper for a Miniſter of the Goſpel, bidding farewel to an unthankful and unkind

unkind People, to ſpeak in his Saviours words to *Jeruſalem*, *Mat.*23.39.—*Ye ſhall not ſee me hence forth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* And if reſtraint of Miniſters ſhall bring forth this fruit, then certainly it will fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel; for if the Meſſenger be prized, the Meſſage will be more likely to be received.

2. This Reſtraint may be to the furtherance of the intereſt of the Goſpel, *In making former Truths to be remembred, repeated, digeſted.* *Alſtedius* uſed to ſay, That all Learning conſiſted in that one word, *Repete, Repeat:* And truly, I had almoſt ſaid, all Religion too. Certainly it is wonderfully to the advantage of Religion, when Doctrins formerly delivered and received, are frequently brought back to mind and memory. The buſineſs of Profeſſors in *England* hath been, to hear new Truths, and freſh Doctrines ſtill, but not to make good as far as they have gone. This fault, it may be, God will mend by this means: As the beaſt taken off his meat, falls to chewing what he had eaten before. Some have rightly obſerved, that they that want their ſight, have commonly the ſtrongeſt memories: who knows but that God may bring it to paſs, that your eyes ſhould not ſee your Teachers, on purpoſe to help your memories in recording old Truths.

3. It may fall out to the furtherance of the intereſt of the Goſpel, *by quickning and ſtirring up Chriſtians ſo much the more to private duties.* The Reſtraint of Miniſters may make many Prieſts, I mean Prieſts in their own families. Methinks it ſhould do thus: Chriſtians ſhould labour to make up in their Families, what is wanting in Congregations. And if it do thus, it will be to the furtherance of the Goſpel; if the loſs of one Prieſt in a Town ſhall bring forth in every Family one.

Thus

Thus have I proved, that God hath made and can make the Reſtraint of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel it ſelf.

Before I faſten upon any Application, I ſhould interweave three or four neceſſary Cautions.

1. The Reſtraint of Miniſters doth ſometimes fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, Yet *this doth not at all extenuate or leſſen the ſin of them that reſtrain them. If I be lifted up*, ſayes our Saviour, (meaning, upon the Croſs) *I will draw all men unto me*, Joh. 12. 32. A caſe ſomewhat like this that I have been ſpeaking to: yet this did not at all leſſen the ſin of the *Jews* in lifting him up; they did it *wickedly*, *Acts* 2. 23. although God determined and ordered it *mercifully*. God makes wicked men many times to uſher in good things and happy events to his People, though they do wickedly in ſo doing. And indeed they do evil in bringing good things to paſs. To be the Mother of a good event or ſucceſs is ſomething indeed, but to be Midwife to it, is no more than the wickedeſt wretch in the world may be. The Devil himſelf doubtleſs hath been a means to ſpeed many a ſoul to Heaven, and yet he is in Hell himſelf.

2. *This doth not excuſe a People from Repentance, who have ſinned away their Teachers.* The Reſtraint of the Miniſters of the Goſpel is in it ſelf a Judgment, and inflicted by reaſon of the unthankfulneſs and unprofitableneſs of a People; And whatever *work* God can make of our ſins, that matters not, it is our *work* to repent of them.

3. *This doth not excuſe the prayers of God's People for the enlargement and reſtitution of their Miniſters.* God will do this happily, he will make it to fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel; yet this doth not ſhut out Prayer. The Goſpel, you ſee, was accidentally furthered

thered by *Paul's* impriſonment, yet he calls to the Faithful to pray for him, and ſo pray for him that he might be reſtored, *Heb.* 13.19. Nay, though you were ſure you ſhould ſee them reſtored, yet the liberty of Chriſt's Meſſengers in the Goſpel is of ſo precious concernment, that you ought to pray, that they might be reſtored *the ſooner*. So the Apoſtle ſpeaks there.

4. Although God can, and although he ſhould make the Reſtraint of his Miniſters to fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, yet *they ought to be ſenſible of it, and humbled under it, as a great affliction, not upon their Congregations only, but upon themſelves too.* My dear Brethren in the Miniſtry, let us lay to heart our own unfaithfulneſs, negligence, inſufficiency, our own ſin, who had ſuch a prize ſo long in our hands, and it hath been like a *prize put into the hands of fools, that knew not how to improve it*, or at leaſt did not improve it. Oh how *good* were it *to be here*, in Pulpits, in Congregations, if it pleaſed God! But we muſt ariſe, *this is not our reſt*: And God knows whether our *Places* muſt again *know us any more*. God is our Witneſs, before whom we ſtand, we ſhould gladly redeem our Liberties in the Goſpel with any thing on this ſide ſin; But it's held at too dear a rate; We muſt part with it; And what have we more? Only let God pardon our ſins, which have robbed us of ſo precious a Jewel, and make it to fall out to the *furtherance of the Goſpel*. If the Prophet *Joel* call, *Gird your ſelves, and lament, ye Prieſts, howl ye Miniſters of the Altar; Come, lye all night in ſackcloth, ye Miniſters of my God: for the meat-offering and the drink-offering is withholden from the houſe of our God*, Joel 1.13. How may I call upon my ſelf, and the reſt of the Miniſters of my God, to lament, when the food of our ſouls, the Bread of Life is withholden from the Congregations of God! *O Lord, ſee-*

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ing thou haſt afflicted us, affect us alſo with our affliction, that we may know this Rod, and thee that haſt appointed it, and accept of the puniſhment of our ſin!

Application.

Doth God ſometimes make the Reſtraint of his Miniſters to fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel? *Learn we then to admire the infinite Wiſdom, Power and Mercy of God*, who over-ruleth and diſpoſeth of things to the good of his People, even contrary to their own natural tendency, brings ſuch eminent good out of ſuch apparent evil, enlargement out of impriſonment, light out of darkneſs, day-break out of dungeons, the Goſpel out of the Goal? Who can do thus, but the God whom we ſerve? What, ſhall we need to doubt the Arm of God in, who can do this?

2. See then how vain and bootleſs the deſign of men and Devils are againſt the intereſt of the Goſpel, and how little to be feared. If God can make ſuch things as theſe fall out to the Goſpels furtherance, then what can be an hinderance? Oh admirable ſecurity, to be intereſted in the Power and Wiſdom of God! what ſhall hurt him whom God harbours? what ſhall ſcorch him whom God ſhadows? What need they fear from worldly policy, who belong to that God, who croſſeth the nature of things, and makes them bring to paſs, not what they would, but what he liſt?

3. *This may adminiſter matter of ſupport to the Miniſters and People of God, who do this day in* England *let looſe their ſouls to ſorrow, and ſink under their own havineſs*. There is indeed matter of mourning; but my Doctrine ſtands by you here, and bids not mourn as men without hope neither. Is not this (my Friends) the common ground both of your and my ſadneſs this day, is not this it that troubles us, even to think of the wayes of *Sion*, leſt they ſhould mourn, the precious

and

and eternal Goſpel, leſt it ſhould be hindred? If that be it, lo here, God can make theſe things to fall out to the furtherance of it. And O that he would do ſo. O that God would ſo bleſs the Church we live in, with Peace, and Truth, and Piety, that we may never be miſt, nor our names never be remembred more; that you may never have cauſe to complain for want of us, nor we once to open our mouths againſt them that ſhut them!

Now that this ſad diſpenſation may indeed fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, let me in the laſt place exhort my ſelf and you, to do our parts towards it. Here now I ſhould run over the wayes, whereby I told you theſe things might fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel: ſome of which cocern Miniſters, others the People.

1. *Let Miniſters improve this reſpite, lay in ſtock, furniſh themſelves better*, that when God ſhall again (if yet again) ſet them over his Houſhold, they may be *Scribes inſtructed to the Kingdom of God*, and as *Stewards bring forth things new and old*, for the maintenanc of the family. Let us give attendance to reading, and exhortation, not neglect the gift that is in us, meditate upon the Scriptures, give our ſelves wholly to them, that our profiting (by affliction) may appear to all men, when we our ſelves ſhall appear.

2. *Let us labour to be patterns of courage, and conſtancy to others*; and not only ſo, but indeed examples of the Beleivers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.

3. *Let us ſtudy our own hearts, dreſs our own Vineyard better than we have done*, that we may be other kind of men and Miniſters hereafter, than formerly we have been. By theſe means amongſt others I told you, the

the reſtraint of the Miniſters of the Goſpel might fall out to the furtherance of the Goſpel: O be not wanting in the improvement of ſo good means, for ſo good and bleſſed an end.

The reſt concern private Chriſtians cheifly.

1. *Be hard at prayer with God, and ceaſe not, till you have prayed us into our liberties in the Goſpel again.*

For this, as for all other mercies, God will be ſought unto; nay it may be for this in a more eſpecial manner. For it ſeems that God hath appointed prayer as a ſpecial means for the reſtoring of his reſtrained Miniſters, *Heb.* 13. 19. *I beſeech you the rather to do this*, (to pray hard) *that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner.* Prayer is that *form of ſpeech*, which Chriſtians ought to uſe, that God would *bring back his baniſhed.* This reſtraint, for ought I know, may have come upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel, becauſe of them that have reſtrained paryer before God, as the phraſe is, *Job* 15. 4. However aſſure your ſelves that God will not open our mouths again to preach till you have well opened, wide opened, your mouths to him in prayer.

2. *Be united amongſt your ſelves.* To have had Miniſters of different perſwaſions, hath doubtleſs maintained and kept alive differences amongſt Profeſſors, which otherwiſe, either had not been, or at leaſt had not been ſo long live'd: And I earneſtly pray God that upon the unhappy laying aſide of Miniſters of one perſwaſion and another, may follow a happy laying aſide of differences amongſt their followers: that upon the ceaſing of *Paul* and of *Apollos*, that unſavory ſpeech, *I am of Paul*, and *I am of Apollos*, may ceaſe alſo. Do not only pray, but joyn in prayer, each with, and each for other. And however you may have too much pleaſed your ſelves to be known and diſtinguiſhed by other names and titles, yet now, if you agree in the com-

common appellation of *men fearing God*, I charge you in the Lord, that ye *ſpeak often one to another*, converſe familiarly and freely each with other; watch no longer for each others halting, but watch over each other to prevent and heal all haltings. Let this ſeparation of Miniſters from People, be for the kniting and curing of that ſeparation that is between People and People.

3. *Be much in the Scriptures, and in other good Books.* How this may be for the informing and ſetling of the judgments of affectionate Profeſſors, I have already hinted, and but hinted. I am now onely to exhort you to it, to preſs you to take that courſe whereby the Goſpel of Chriſt may be furthered. Even Reading is an Ordinance of God, and therefore you may pray for God's bleſſing upon it; nay, therefore ye ought. I ſpeak not of tranſient, curſory viewing of Books, but of a ſerious, ſolemn, reverent, deliberate, religious exerciſe of Reading. Be often ſmelling to that ſacred and fragrant bundle of Myrrhe, the *Bible of God*; by ſomewhat in which each ſpiritual ſenſe ſhall be refreſhed. Ply your Book, this Book, the harder, now that they are taken off that taught you; reade your Bibles, and bleſs God that you have Bibles to reade, skil to reade them, and liberty to uſe your skil, that you have your *Fathers Will* in your *Mother-tongue*, which all Chriſtians have not, which God grant we may alwayes have. And now let good, ſavory, practical Divinity find ſome room, more room than ſometimes in your houſes, hands, heads, hearts you have profeſſed a great while; it's time to begin to know ſomewhat now: And this is a way of getting knowledge, which will maintain zeal and affection. If it be not the only way, I am ſure it is one of the beſt means that we have left us, to preſerve our ſelves from the corrupt Doctrines, and falſe Opinions, by which

which we ſhall be ſtrongly aſſaulted, and the minds of many ſorely ſhaken. A well-read Scholar is but a jejune commendation indeed; but a well-read Chriſtian is a noble character; *Acts* 17. 11. — *Theſe were more noble, &c.*

4. *Preach you now in your places, by your communication and converſation.* Out of your calling go not, out of Goſpel-Order go not, ſhew forth a ſober ſpirit in all things; confound not the difference, which God himſelf hath made, between Miniſters and People. But *exhort one another; conſider one another, to provoke* (not to anger and jealouſie, as heretofore, but) *to love and good works*, Heb. 10. 24. Somewhat more you ought to do, now that we muſt no more do what we were wont. Watch over each other lovingly, tenderly, faithfully, in this abſence of your *Watchmen*. Study to promote the cauſe of Religion, and to carry on the Kingdom and Intereſt of Jeſus Chriſt, as God hath given you talents, and ſhall give you occaſion to lay them forth. If it muſt be ſo indeed that God will take off the *Keepers* of his *Vineyard* for a time, let each man of you become *his Brothers Keeper*.

5. *Reflect upon your former ſlight and common thoughts of the Goſpel, and Goſpel-Ordinances, and be humble for that careleſs and drowſie temper; and labour to beget and encreaſe in your ſouls more earneſt longings after, and more ſuitable valuations of the Miniſtry and diſpenſation thereof.* To have good ſtomachs, ſharp appetites towards ſpiſpiritual food, will both get meat, and give a reliſh to it, whereas the hunger of the body can only do the latter. Doubtleſs God's will concerning you in withdrawing the Table, is to reprove your wantonneſs and ſurfetings, and to make his Word precious in theſe dayes, and to the men of this generation. If you would yet again have bread, ask, long, and cry for bread.

They that would have bread of *Joseph* must buy it, give money, cattle lands, and all for it, *Gen.*47. But they that would have bread of God, must be hungry for it. As Christians get rest, by being weary, *Mat.* 11.28. so they get food, by being hungry, *Mat.* 5.6.

6. *Be more frequent, more fervent in private Duties, in Family Duties, in what's most secret.* Usurp not the Office, and be as much of a Minister to your Families as you can: I do not say that you now may do somewhat which formerly you might not, but that you must do somewhat more than formerly you did. Pray oftner, Catechise more, read more, press the Word read more upon your Families, and labour to bring them acquainted with it. If you will but be convinced of a necessity of mending your pace, and doubling your diligence, and will but up and be doing, you may make the Gospel a gainer. Alas that I should be forc'd to speak a word which will be so little for the honor of the Gospel! The Professors thereof in *England* are become slow to Duty, and of a drowsie temper: As to *publick*; specious, but little serious: as to *private*, perhaps constant, but very cold; as to *secret*, I doubt very careless. A Professor of late hath been little or nothing more than another man, save only that he hath heard one Sermon in a week more. Alas, the very best are remiss, and seem to be of the declining hand. If a serious zealous Christian of another Church, should demand of our Ministers concerning their people, as the followers of *John* asked our Saviour concerning his Disciples (*Mat.*9.14.) Why do we and the Professors of other Churches fast oft, *&c.* but your people fast not, pray not, sanctifie not the Sabbath to any purpose? Is it not because the Bridegrooms are with them? is it so indeed? The day is just upon you, that the Bridegrooms are taken away; God grant that our curb may

prove

prove your ſpurt: The leſs we muſt do for you, the more do you for your ſelves and your Children.

7. *Call to remembrance old Truths*, repeat in your hearts, and in your houſes too, what ye have formerly received, chew upon the Word that you have formerly eaten. Who knows but that God may have taken you off your meat, your green and flouriſhing Paſtures, on purpoſe to make you find your cud. Oh the precious Truths that at this day lye by the Profeſſors of *England*, as ſtale commodities, or meats out of ſeaſon! verily, one Sermon-leſs-year will make you make a meal of the moſt deſpiſeable and homely diſh that was ever ſet before you. If you can but ſuck at old Truths with new appetites, you will find freſh vertue coming from them: and that Doctrine that was laid aſide, as having ſerved one turn, may be effectually taken up for many other good purpoſes in the ſoul. It is ſaid of our Saviours Diſciples once and again in the Goſpel, after he himſelf was removed from them, *Then they remembred the words of Jeſus; his Diſciples remembred that he had ſaid this unto them*, Joh. 2. 22. and again Joh. 12. 16. *Theſe things underſtood not his Diſciples at the firſt, but when Jeſus was glorified, then remembred they, &c.* The former part of this verſe (Ah!) how true is it of this People of *England*? Oh that the latter part may be found ſo to! that this affliction may prove a rod to bring to remembrance, both ſins committed, and Truths neglected; that ſo the People of God may be truly humbled, and the Goſpel of God greatly furthered.

In a word, What ever God ſhall reveal unto you as a pertinent Duty, as a Duty of the ſeaſon, as a means to further the eternal Goſpel of Chriſt, that do: In the mean time praying and purpoſing (as *Elihu* ſayes it *meet*, Job 34. 32.) *That which I ſee not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

SERMON IX.

by John Crompton M. A. V. of Arnold Nottinghamsh^e

Epheſ. 6. 18. *With all Prayer,*——

DYing Iſrael gave his Children portions, and to *Joſeph* one above his Brethren, *Gen.* 48. 22. I would commend one or two parts above what ſome of your brethren are content to ſit down with; *All Prayer.* Three are *All*, as we ſpeak of principles.

I. *Publick Prayer. Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that I will ſeek after, That I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord, all the dayes of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.* He ſubjected himſelf to the appointed publick means, and reſolved his purſuance of them, in caſe of hidings.

This Ordinance of Solemn Meetings, appointed,

1. That God's Name may be hallowed. *Pſal.* 29. 1, 2. *Give unto the Lord Glory, worſhip Him in the Beauty of Holineſs.* Glory muſt be given unto the Lord; and we muſt alwayes look what way the Lord hath preſcribed for it; and that is in his own Ordinances. Singularly is the glory of God's Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, *&c.* born upon the ſhoulders of many: this way God rides in triumph. The Kings honour is in multitude of Subjects. Bleſſed Parents have a full quiver. Great Men have many poor at their gates. At an Aſſize and Seſſions, Great Men have more cognizances, than at private meetings, and this for their honours. When Men, Women, and Children, lay ſiege to Heaven, *Hæc vis grata Deo. Tertul.* It's the Glory of God to be overcome by a multitude.

2. Herein

2. Herein his People are regarded.

1. Hopes given them of Audience, *Mat.* 18.20. There's a threefold cord in this one kind of Prayer, ſtrong to remove Evils, and a powerful twiſt to pull down Bleſſings. The Wayes ſure will be mended, when not only rich men with their teems, but cottages with their ſcuttles come to the common work.

2. The Godly quickned in the Duty. Growing and thriving People have that language, *Zech.* 8. 21. *Come let us go and Pray*, I'l make one in *Prayer*; O come let us *worſhip*.

3. Others ſtir'd up. When they ſee a King, a Landlord, a Maſter, caſting a copy for them, 2 *Chron.* 6, 12. Thus they are ready to reaſon; See, my concernments are like theirs, but not my heart, zeal, love to God, watchfulneſs, preparation, *&c.* What a fool am I in the midſt of the Congregation! *&c.*

II. *Private Prayer. Joſh.* 24. 25. *I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord.* There ſhould be right houſhold-Order and Government, according to the Rule, amongſt Chriſtians. *Col.* 4. 1. *Paul* ſpeaks to Maſters of Families, to carry like good Kings, in the firſt verſe, and in the ſecond, minds them of their Prieſtly Office; *Continue in Prayer.*

This Kind inſtituted;

Firſt, That his Name may be hallowed. The wiſe and merciful God hath a quick Eye, and a ſtrong Shoulder; as he knoweth, ſo he profers to bear burdens, wherewhith Families are loaden: *Caſt your care on me, for I care for you.* When we lock up our ſelves at night, and have Prayer, the Key, at our girdles, letting out our ſelves in the morning under his Providence, we have him for our God, and acknowledge him what he is.

Secondly, Families regarded.

1. A bar to domeſtick Diſcords. There muſt neceſſarily

ceſſarily be a ſtudied, intended, right carriage in the family where Prayers are on foot.

2. Servants and Children acquainted with their Duties, framed to that Worſhip of God, fitted for publick Prayer, *&c.*

3. Superiors in Families hereby are under rich Promiſes, *Gen.* 18.17.

4. Affaires of the whole ſanctified, 1 *Tim.* 4.5.

II. *Secret Prayer, Mat.* 6.6.

This kind inſtituted,

Firſt, That God's Name may be hallowed. For the more *ſelf* is ſet aſide, more way is made for God's Glory, the Glory of his Omniſciency, *&c.*

Secondly, Particular regard of man,

1. As to the matter of Prayer. What an Hell the Houſe would be but for the Cloſet. If the wife heard the confeſſed, vile miſcarriages of the husband, and the husband did but peep into the heart of the wife through an open window, and ſo in other relations,—Satan, and corrupt nature, would ſoon cut the cords of amity, diſſolve bands, knit angry looks, weave vexatious geſtures, contrive evil ſurmiſes, hinder domeſtick Prayer, *&c.*

2. Manner. Secret Prayer is elbow-room-Duty. The knots, in the *Actus exerciti quoad individuum*, cut. No *Act of Uniformity* takes place here. In a word, Thou maiſt be what thou wilt be, if *ipſe locus ſis, as Bernard.* I leave thee with thy Bridegroom in ſecret.

U. S. E.

Let me hear my Will read (give leave to the impropriety of ſpeech) what I have bequeathed to you: Your deeds are good, if you have every parcel. You count right (as we ſay in Arithmetick) if you anſwer the total, or *All.*

1. My eldeſt Son in the Cloſet. Read 1 *Cor.* 11.22.

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(though in another caſe) *What have you not houſes to Pray in, or deſpiſe you the Church?* I mean, forſake you the aſſembling of your ſelves together? for one duty to ſwallow up another, it ſpoiles *All.* The whole City to be in the Gates, is not good.

2. My ſecond Son in the Family. You have your Houſe well adorned, but there's ſomething wanting. A man is a man, though he want an arm or a leg, but is not integral. Your Prayers are not Mathematically total; but when they are, then are you.

3. My third. Publick Prayer is good when there is a concurrance of Family and ſecret. You do well when you believe the Hiſtory: but to reſt in Hiſtorical faith, is not *that* I commend. I give to every one of you an allowance, and yet you are found too light. *Mene, mene tekel.*

But *firſt*, What light peeces without allowance.
Secondly, With allowance.

Firſt, We conſider ſecret Prayer.

1. It may be thou makeſt thy cloſet but a creep-hole, hiding thy ſelf from reproof, pleading that thy heart is as good as thoſe that make the greateſt ſhew. Though I make not that appearance in the Church, nor that noiſe in my houſe, yet I pray in ſecret. Pardon my miſtruſt, I fear thy prayers are not conſtant. Again, thou wilt ſay, I pray alwayes. I anſwer, As it is in point of Sabbath, when men plead, every day ought to be kept a Sabbath, and then no Sabbath is kept. So thy praying *alwayes*, is not to pray at all.

2. Admit thou prayeſt in ſecret; Doſt thou perform Duty out of Conſcience to the Command? If not, thy ſacrifice is not accepted. 1 *Sam.* 15.22. *Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to Obey is better*

than Sacrifice, and to Hearken, than the fat of Rams: For rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, &c. If thou ſay out of Conſcience of Command; then what anſwereſt thou to God, who commands *all Prayer? James* 2.11. For he that ſaid, pray in ſecret, ſaid alſo, pray in family; now if thou prayeſt in ſecret, and not in family, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the Law.

3. Thou being a Maſter of a family, contenteſt thy ſelf with ſecret prayer.

1. My Family will not be ſubject to Houſe-duty. Art thou a King in thy Houſe, as *Jezebel* (in a far different caſe) ſaid, *Doſt thou now govern the Kingdom?* Doſt thou give up thy Lordſhip? Loſe not thy Authority, O King, ſay, *I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord.*

2. Wilt thou ſay, I am aſhamed to appear in publick? If Prayer be a black deed, than let red cover thy face. Art thou afraid of children or fools (even ſuch are ſcoffings *Michals*) think it not much to be vile in their ſight, and thine own ſight too. Be not aſhamed of Chriſt, who is not aſhamed of thee his Brother, but fear leſt he be aſhamed of thee when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, *Mark* 8.38.

3. My thronging family buſineſs will not permit.

Anſw. As we are to pray with all Prayer, ſo to watch with al Watchfulneſs; not only to watch in prayer, and after to hear God's anſwer, but unto Prayer. He is a ſtrange God who gives thee Lands, Labourers, *&c.* and gives thee no time. Why, hath God given thee two Oxen together, two Horſes, two Servants together, but thy hours not two together, but *minutatim*? this certainly to index to thee, and to give thee warning, that time is to be improved, and weighed very ſtrictly, and more regarded than thy Horſes, &c. Let me perſwade thee to look after Bleſſings in God's Way. Daily bread is ſweeteſt that is got by Prayer and Labour.

Secondly,

Secondly, Light with allowance.

Though I give thee the allowance of that weighty duty of Family-Prayer, yea, if thou couldſt truly ſay (with the young man) *Thus have I prayed from my youth up, what lack I yet?* I muſt anſwer thee, One Prayer more is wanting, *i. e.* Publick Prayer. As it is in Petitions, to ask *daily bread*, and not *hallowed be thy Name*, is but a lame prayer: and to pray for Juſtification, in that Petition, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, but not for Sanctification in that following, *and lead us not into temptation*, it meaſures not out the blood of Chriſt rightly, which reacheth to the purifying of his People as well as pardoning: becauſe of ſomething wanting, the foreſaid Prayer is but a mutile, halting prayer. So when one limb is cut off, all Prayer is maimed: thy Deed is imperfect. Thou haſt both Houſe and Land, but not the Commons thereunto belonging.

II. *Family Prayer.*

Firſt, If there be nothing but this Family-Prayer, it is not one half of All.

1. I miſtruſt that ſomething beſides the glory of God, moves thee to it; may be thou waſt brought up in a praying Family, and cuſtom puts thee upon duty: or elſe the ſought applauſe of thy Family, or Neighbours, thou art deſirous to ſeem to be a good Chriſtian rather than to be ſo, and ſeekeſt after the *gift* of Prayer rather than the *grace* of Prayer.

2. I miſtruſt thou art not conſtant in duty; may be upon the Sabbath, but not in thy ſix dayes; may be at night when thou haſt time, but not in the morning: may be when buſineſs is not throng, but ſeed-time and harveſt, or ſtrangers will eaſily put thee by.

3. Admit

3. Admit a conſtancy; it's not obedience to the Law-giver; for he that hath commanded thee to attend him in thy Parlour, hath ſaid the like of the Cloſet. Obedience muſt be *copulative* and *connexive*. The Soveraignity of God is alike in all kinds of Prayer. The diſregarding of ſecret Prayer, is the diſregarding the Soveraignity of him, who is *Unicus Præceptor*, *Mat.* 6. 6.

Secondly, But though I give thee an allowance of one weighty kind, *viz.* ſecret Prayer; Yet for all this, thou art not currant. For as it is in the Commandments, to reſpect one and not another, ſhews a want of ſincerity, and thou mayeſt be aſhamed when the wicked call thee an Hypocrite, *Pſal.* 119. 6. So as it is in the parts of a Commandment, the negative part of the fourth Commandment, it is good not to labour: but when thou haſt no reſpect to the poſitive, the ſanctification of that reſt, thou keepeth the Sabbath of the *Ox*. As in this, ſo in Prayer, though thou maiſt be under a kind of promiſe, to one kind of Prayer, yet all promiſes are made to all Prayer.

Obj. If thou replyeſt, *My Prayers ſhould be perfect, if I did like thoſe publick Prayers.*——

Anſw. Obſerve this in publick Prayers, let this parallel guide thee; I have known Pillars in the Church, who though they could preach ably and powerfully at home, had the choice labours of the Learned by them; yet durſt not abſent themſelves from publick Preaching, though the Miniſter accounted none of the wiſeſt, nor his Sermons free from light mixtures. The ſincere milk of the Word, was that they deſired, and the publick inſtituted Ordinance regarded by them, did ſilence them at their own houſes; they would walk with the Aſſembly upon the roof, ſo long as the unmoved Foundations would bear them. Prayer is tole-

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rable for the manner, when I go to the Father through Jesus Christ, assisted by the Spirit.

Obj. *I like not Prayers with such a mixt company.*

Ans. We may reade in *David's* Psalms of the constitution of the Church-visible in *Saul's* time. Unsound, hypocritical, wicked Professors, amongst *David* and others who were sincere. In those times *David* wisheth to have occasion of publick worshipping again, and accounts highly of what he did formerly enjoy, having gone with the multitude to serve God in publick.

III. *Publick Prayer.*

First, If thy All be only in publick.

1. I must crave leave modestly to mind thee of my mistrust, that thou hast thoughts that the place it self makes prayers efficacious, and thou groundest the special promise of Audience on it, and not upon Communion of Saints.

2. I fear there is much of *self* in thee. Thou mayest go for a good Church-man in the account of thy neighbours, and mayest have that reward for thy service; when in the account of God thou art an ill Christian. Mat. 6. 5. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray, standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

3. Admit the best, as *Isaac* to his father, *Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the Lamb?* Here is indeed Sacrifice and fat of Rams, but where is *Obedience* and hearkning to all that the Lord hath given in charge?

Secondly. But giving thee the allowance of that weighty duty of Family-Prayer, and yet thou wantest weight. Though thy house be a Church, resembling it in

in this duty of Prayer; *Domum veſtram non parvam Chriſti Eccleſiam deputamus*, as of *Juliana*, to whom *Auguſtine* writ: *For thou wouldſt take it ill to be told, that thou prayeſt at the Church, and ſweareſt at home:* as *Bernard* reproves *Eugenius, that the Laws of Juſtinian made a greater noiſe in his Palace than the Laws of God.* Admit, I ſay this, yet thou art not altogether ſuch an one as I would have thee: For as in Faith, when Charity is wanting, we may call it right Faith, but it is not right ſaving Faith; So of thy Prayers, It's well thou prayeſt, but thou prayeſt not well. If thou ſhouldeſt withdraw thy belief from a Truth revealed in the Scripture, thy Faith is partial: So is thy Obedience when a duty is declared in the ſame, and is neglected; when all comes to all, thou falleſt ſhort of that ſingular and neceſſary duty of ſecret Prayer.

1. What if I be bold to ſay, thou art nothing but what thou art in ſecret. The Kingdom of God appeareth what it is, when it cometh *not with obſervation*, *Luke* 17.20,21. It's not Spectability, but *Glory within* which makes the King's daughter like her ſelf. Hidden ones, under the Fig-tree, are his indeed, whom he eſpecially eyeth.

2. Let the truly practical judge, whether I be too bold, in ſaying, *that thoſe that reſolutely turn aſide to crooked wayes, of judgment, of manners, are ſuch, as enter not conſtantly into their Cloſets, daily exerciſing themſelves in this, difficult, differencing duty of* Secret Prayer.

A mere Skeleton & very inaccurately written

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SERMON X. *by Mr Robt Seddon. Langley. Derbyshire.*

Luke 24. 50, 51.

And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lift up his hands and bleſſed them.
And it came to paſs while He bleſſed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven.

IN the preceding Chapters, the holy Evangeliſt *Luke*, had by the guidance of the holy Ghoſt, given account of the ſtate of humiliation, and in this Chap. holdeth out the Exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt: This he doth in declaring two great Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.

The firſt is, the firſt ſtep and degree of Chriſt's Exaltation, namely his Reſurrection, which is confirmed by Scripture, by Witneſſes who ſaw him, handled him, and ſaw him eat, which the ſame *Luke*, *Acts* 1. 3. calleth infallible Proofs, from ver. 1. to the 50th.

The ſecond is this in my Text; *He aſcended into Heaven.* Wherein you have four parts.

1. Chriſt leading out as a Captain, or Shepherd, his Diciples from *Jeruſalem* to *Bethany.*

2. You find him parted from them, in reſpect of bodily preſence.

3. You have his Aſcenſion, He was carried up into Heaven.

4. Here is his *Valediction* or Farewel to his Diſciples. And ſurely he who all the time of his abode with them ſpake kindly, called them friends, excuſed their failings, and would not over-drive them, nor put them on too harſh ſervices, leſt the bottles ſhould break, and

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the garments rent, He cannot be unkind at laſt. He who began his firſt Sermon with nine Bleſſings, *Mat.* 5. cannot conclude as the old Teſtament concludeth, with a Curſe; He who was alwayes in the days of his fleſh on Mount-*Gerizzim*, to Bleſs and Pray for his Diſciples, cannot be ſo changed as to aſcend Mount-*Ebal*, to Curſe at laſt. No, but having loved his own, he loved them to the end; here is a parting, but neither height nor depth could ſeparate them from his love. When the time of his departing drew near, he let out his love more abundantly, and gave moſt ſignal expreſſions of entire affection: that love that brought him from his Fathers boſome was not quenched nor abated by many waters. He had paid dear, and ſuffered deeply for his People, he had given his life, and ſhed his precious blood for them, yet he is at further coſt. *He lift up his hands and Bleſſed them.*

In this laſt part, Chriſts *Valediction*, you have, 1. An Agent— and that is Jeſus Chriſt, who is bleſſed for ever, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth was given, who undertook no Office without Call, nor exerciſed any without Authority; he Bleſſed them, and that not without Commiſſion, for God ſent him to Bleſs.

2. The perſons bleſſed; and they were a ſelect number, choſen out of the world, given into his hand, called to be Witneſſes of Chriſt's Sufferings, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and to Preach the Goſpel. Obſerve here, *Judas* who betrayed Chriſt was not amongſt them, but loſt the Bleſſing, and came under the Curſe, propheſied of long before, *Pſal.* 109. 8. Though he had the honour to be one of Chriſt's Diſciples, dignified with gifts ordinary, and extraordinary, yet his Apoſtacy procured him that dreadful Curſe, *Wo be to that man, it had been good for that man he had never been born;*

born. They that were the constant followers of Christ, whom he led out, they are his blessed ones.

3. Here is the action, ἐυλόγησεν, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐυλογεῖν, he blessed them, and in blessing, or while he blessed, twice mentioned, that we should well consider it.

4. The circumstances of this Farewel, and they are three, the Place, the Time, the Gesture.

1. The Place, *Bethany*, it was a Village about fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*, the Town of *Mary* and *Martha* and *Lazarus*, where Christ raised *Lazarus*, *John* 11. 1, 8, 18. *Bethany at the mount of Olives*, so it is called, *Mark* 11. 1. Reverend *Beza*, upon *Act.* 1. 12. where the Ascension of Christ seemeth to be from Mount *Olivet*, understandeth by *Bethany*, not strictly the Village, but the whole tract, containing the Mount of *Olives*, and that from the Mount near *Bethany* Christ ascended. You see Christ could make a house of affliction or poverty (as *Bethany* signifieth) a place of blessing; he is not tied to places, but where two or three are gathered in his Name, there is he amongst them; where true Worshippers are worshipping him in Spirit and Truth, there will he come unto them and bless them: He preached and pronounced blessing in the Monnt. The Disciples, *John* 20. 19. were met in a house, and had the doors shut for fear of the *Jews*, and Christ came and said, *Peace be unto you.* He might at his Ascension have Blessed his Disciples in the Temple, or holy City, but he led them out to mount *Olivet* where, or nigh to which *Bethany* stood. And why? Some say, lest being seen, new troubles should arise; but the main reason is, because he would have a select number to be eye witnesses, to testifie to the world that he ascended, according to *Acts* 10. 40, 41. *Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the People, but unto Witnesses chosen before of*

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God, even unto us —— ſo *Beza*, on *Acts* 1. 12. *Hiſtoria ipſa* —— The Hiſtory it ſelf ſheweth, that Chriſt would not aſcend into Heaven from ſome place where there were many Inhabitants, or other Witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, but took only his Diſciples into ſome part of the Mount *Olivet*, to be Witneſſes of his departure from us, in reſpect of the humane nature, till the laſt day.

2. The Time when he bleſſed them. Juſt at his Aſcenſion: he had bleſſed them before, and doth it now ſolemnly, with hands lifted up; it was the laſt thing he did on Earth. He was ſeen of his Apoſtles forty dayes after his Reſurrection, and now that they muſt ſee him no longer on earth, he would ſhew them not only his hands and his feet (as ſometimes he did for the ſtrengthening of their Faith) but his heart enlarged in love and compaſſion, his bowels yearning towards them, he here kiſſeth them with the kiſſes of his mouth, and his lips drop ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe on them, he ſpeaks kindly to them, Bleſſeth them, and while he Bleſſed, διέστη, he departed.

3. The Geſture uſed in Bleſſing, ἐπάρας τὰς χεῖρας, *He lift up his hands*. Where obſerve, it is arrogance and great preſumption in the Papiſts to ſay, for the upholding of their Crucifixes and Croſſings, that its very like that Chriſt Bleſſed them with his arms croſs, as *Jacob* Bleſſed *Joſeph's* Sons, *Gen.* 48. 17. See *Rhem. Teſtam.* Where *Jacob* (as is evident from the text) laid his right hand on the head of the younger, by a Spirit of prophecy, fore-telling that he ſhould be the greater, and at not all in favour of any their ſuperſtitious uſe of the ſign of the Croſs, whereof *Valentinus* the Heretick was the firſt that made any great account; as Dr. *Fulke* relateth out of *Irenæus*. We have Chriſt's Bleſſing in the Text twice mentioned, and

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the geſture not omitted of *lifting up his hands*, but a total ſilence of the ſign of the Croſs. We may then conclude it is a curſed addition of the *Rhemiſts*, who preſume to father that upon *Jacob*, nay, on the Lord Chriſt, which is indeed but a Novel fancy, not in any eſtimation with the Apoſtles, nor the Godly in their time. How can they reade and not tremble, *Rev.* 22. 18. *If any man add, God ſhall add to him the plagues?*——

Nor can Chriſt's uſing of this geſture, warrant humane Inventions in the Worſhip of God, nor the rigorous enforcing of a heap of Geſtures, Veſtments, and other unneceſſary and ungrounded Ceremonies, ſo as men muſt not worſhip at all, nor enjoy their properties without them; ſince lifting up of the hands is but a natural geſture of Reverence and Authority; neither is there any conſequence in arguing from things written to things Apocryphal. But as bodily exerciſe profiteth little, ſo large diſcourſes about it are but little to edification of common hearers. Only let me mind you, that Jeſus Chriſt was faithful as *Moſes*, and his Apoſtles kept back nothing that was profitable for us. Scripture muſt not, cannot be taxed with deficiency. And, *little children, keep your ſelves from Idols*; O be not tainted with *Romiſh Superſtitions*, when her *plagues* are ſo nigh at hand.

But the Doctrine which I would this day commend to you from theſe words, is this.

Doct. *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt went to Heaven, ſolemnly bleſſing his Diſciples.*

In this Doctrine you have two branches; 1. Chriſt aſcended into Heaven: 2. Chriſt bleſſed his Diſciples at his Aſcenſion.

1. Jeſus Chriſt went into Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 3. 22.

There are three Reaſons why Chriſt aſcended: The firſt is, that he might fulfill the Scriptures; In his Aſcenſion he fulfilled Scripture-Types and Scripture-Propheſies; Chriſt was typified in the High-Prieſt's going into the ſecond Tabernacle alone once every year, not without blood, *Heb.* 9. 7, 24. *Chriſt is entred not into thoſe Holy places made with hands, which are* ἀντίτυπα, *the figure of the true, but into Heaven it ſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.* It was propheſied of Chriſt, *Pſal.* 68. 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive.* The Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 8, 9. expoundeth this Text, as accompliſhed in Chriſt's Aſcenſion.

2. Chriſt aſcended that he might be glorified: He had glorified his Father on Earth, and finiſhed the work which the Father gave him to do, and then went to be glorified with his Father, *John* 17. 4, 5. He had been manifeſt in the fleſh, and then is received up into Glory: He deſcended, dwelt among men, was a man of ſorrows, and again aſcended and ſate down at the Right-hand of the Majeſty on high, when he had purged our ſins by himſelf, *Heb.* 1. 3. As it was impoſſible he ſhould be held of Death, ſo it was impoſſible he ſhould be held in a ſtate of Humiliation: *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer, and enter into his Glory?* Luke 24. 26. The Viſion of Chriſt's glorified Body is reſerved for Heaven in mercy, one glimpſe thereof in the Tranſfiguration put *Peter* in a trance. Chriſt aſcended to be glorified.

3. It was expedient for us that Chriſt ſhould aſcend.

Obj. *O but how can theſe things be? how much better had it been for us to have had Chriſts bodily preſence ſtill on Earth! What a deal of good did he by his Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Compaſſion on the Poor, Blind, Diſeaſed, that cryed*

cryed for help for themſelves, children, and ſervants? Lord, hadſt thou been here, my brother had not dyed, *ſaid* Martha: *So may poor deſolate ſouls ſay, Lord, hadſt thou been on Earth ſtill, this evil, and that ſtorm had not come upon the Church, or particular members of it. Expedient Chriſt go? O leave us not!*

Anſw. In general: Saddeſt providences and moſt terrible things, whereby God anſwereth his People, often carry a great deal of ſweetneſs and comfort in them, which we through ignorance and unbelief hardly diſcern. Chriſtians often looſe much by poring on preſent or imminent evils, and not looking to the ſweet Reſult and glorious iſſue thereof. We walk too much by ſence, and too little eye, by Faith, the things that are not ſeen. Thus the Diſciples were loth to hear that Chriſt muſt be put to death: When he was buryed, *We truſted* (ſay two of them, *Luke* 24.21.) *it had been he that ſhould have redeemed Iſrael.* Their Faith was low, not conſidering that he came to give his Life a Ranſome for many. Such fools, ſo ſlow of heart are we to believe. Thus when Chriſt told the Diſciples, *I go my way to him that ſent me.* They asked him not, whither goeſt thou? and therefore ſorrow filled their hearts, *John* 16. 5, 6, 7. they did not look to the ſweet Fruit which they ſhould reap of his Departure; they would have found cauſe of joy, had they ſeriouſly conſidered that Chriſt went to his Father, and their Father, to his God, and their God.

But particularly, You have Chriſt's Word for it, which ſhould ſilence all objections, and queſtioning thoughts. *John.* 16.7. *Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away.*

There were four Expediencies of Chriſt's Aſcenſion in reſpect of us.

1. It was expedient for us that Chriſt ſhould aſcend,

that he might in our nature, as our Head and Surety, take poſſeſſion of Heaven for us. *Heb.6.20. Whither the fore-runner is for us entred, even Jeſus.* He had purchaſed the Inheritance, and paid the price, and he went to have ſeizen and poſſeſſion for us. *John 14. 2. I go to prepare a place for you.*

2. Chriſt's Aſcenſion was expedient for us, that he might intercede for us in Heaven, and now *appear in the Preſence of God for us*, Heb.9.24. and that we might have that conſolation, 1 *Joh.2.2. If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* And *Heb.7.25. He ever liveth to make interceſſion.* We have a conſtant, and skilful, faithful Sollicitor in the Court of Heaven, pleading our cauſe. Is the Church militant oppreſſed? Jeſus the Angel of the Covenant pleadeth, *How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? Zech. 1. 12.* and he is anſwered with good and comfortable words, *I am returned with Mercies to Jeruſalem*, as it follows, *ver. 16.*

The Lord Chriſt ſtandeth as with a golden Cenſer, having much Incenſe, which he offereth with the Prayers of Saints on the Golden Altar before the Throne; the Smoak of which Incenſe, with the Prayers of the Saints, aſcendeth before God out of the Angels Hand. When his People pray on Earth, He, as their Sollicitor, procureth a Grant in Heaven, which he ſometimes ſendeth down by a ſwift Meſſenger: So he did to *Daniel* and *Cornelius.*

So that now being aſcended, Believers may triumph. Who ſhall condemn? It is Chriſt that died, is riſen again, is at the Right Hand of God, who alſo *maketh interceſſion for us.*

3. It was expedient for us that Chriſt ſhould aſcend, that he might ſend the Spirit, the Comforter. *Joh.16.7. If I go away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if*

if I depart, I will ſend him to you. The ſending of the Spirit, to lead Believers into Truth, to convince the World, to help Believers Infirmities, to quicken, to comfort, to ſtabliſh them, and to abide with them to the end of the World, is the fruit of Chriſts Aſcenſion.

4. Chriſt's Aſcenſion was expedient, to aſſure us, that he hath fully ſatisfied Juſtice for the ſins of his Elect, and left nothing undone of the great Work which he undertook. *Heb.* 9. 12. *By his own Blood he entred once into the holy Place, having obtained Eternal Redemption for us.* His ſitting at the Right Hand of God is an evidence that he hath obtained for us Eternal Redemption. In his Aſcenſion he triumphed over all Enemies; He had ſpoiled Principalities, ſpoiled them of their Prey, having reſcued his Elect; ſpoiled them of their Dominion and Power over his Sheep; He had caſt out the Prince of this World, the Accuſer of the Brethren; and He made ſhew of them openly, *Col.* 2. 15. *Chriſt having overcome Death and Hell, declareth his Conqueſt, in aſcending as a Conqueror into Heaven.*

Take the Application in four Particulars, briefly.

1. Chriſt is gone to Heaven. Be not deceived by falſe chriſt's; *Such ſhall come*, Mat. 24. 24. O remember he is not here, but aſcended, as he told his Diſciples: Seek not then a bodily preſence in the Sacrament; *The Heavens muſt contain him*, Acts 3. 21.

The Martyrs, who burned at the Stake (not for ceremonies, &c. as ſome would have it, but) for denying Tranſubſtantiation, or the bodily Preſence of Chriſt in the Lord's Supper (however now-a-dayes, ſome beſpatter them) had a ſure Foundation to build on. The Scripture makes it plain, that Chriſt's Body is in Heaven.

2. Chriſt is gone into Heaven; Chriſtians, let your hearts be there; *Seek thoſe things that are above, where*

Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God, Col. 3. 1. Why do ye grovel on Earth, when Chriſt your beſt Friend is in Heaven? What on Earth can ſatisfie? or what is to be deſired when Chriſt is gone? Well may Believers deſire, with the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 1. 23. *to be diſſolved, and be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

3. Let us prepare for Chriſt's Coming from Heaven. *Phil.* 3. 20. *Behold He cometh quickly, in like manner as he aſcended*; but more glorioufly attended, more manifeſt, *every eye ſhall ſee him. Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching*, *Luke* 12. 37. We are left to trade with talents, our Lord will come *and reckon with us*, Mat. 25. 19. *Be ready, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour when ye think not*, Luke 12. 40. O let us watch.

4. Laſtly. Be *comforted*, Chriſt our Fore-runner is in Heaven; He is gone, but he went about our buſineſs. This providence of Chriſt's *departing*, looketh with a bitter aſpect; it is doleful to conſider, *Chriſt is Gone*. But as *Jacob's* Spirit revived when he knew *Joſeph* was alive, ſo it is exceeding comfortable for drooping diſtreſſed ſouls to *conſider* Chriſt hath taken poſſeſſion of a glorious Houſe, incorruptible Inheritance, and a biding Kingdom for us. *We have an Advocate with the Father*; our Redeemer liveth, and we ſhall ſee him: All his Enemies ſhall be made his footſtool. Chriſt is glorified; his Members however vilified on earth, ſhall be like Him, and abide with Him, and He will be admired in his Saints. *He is gone to prepare a place for us, and will come again and receive us*, John 14. 3.

And thus much briefly for this firſt branch; *Chriſt Aſcended.*

The ſecond is, Chriſt bleſſed his Diſciples at his Aſcenſion.

But (may ſome one ſay) *How did Chriſt bleſs them?*

I anſwer, εὐλογέω, To bleſs, is, to ſpeak well. So Chriſt alwayes ſpake well, *Never man ſpake like Him.* Grace was poured in his lips, and gracious Words proceeded out of his mouth. But it hath a more ſpecial Importance.

1. To bleſs, is to acknowledge the Bleſſedneſs and Perfection of another. So the greater is bleſſed of the leſs. So with the tongue we bleſs God, even the Father, and our Souls bleſs the Lord.

2. To bleſs, is ſometimes to pray for a Bleſſing. So *Iſaac* bleſſed *Jacob*, when he prayed, *God give thee of the Dew of Heaven*, Gen. 27. 27. *And God Almighty bleſs thee*, *Gen.* 28. the *1ſt* and *3d*. Thus *Jacob* bleſſed *Joſephs* Sons, when he prayed, *The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bleſs the lads*, Gen. 48. 9, & 16.

3. To bleſs, is to pronounce a bleſſing, and that either in the way of an ordinary Miniſtry. Thus *Aaron* and his Sons were to bleſs the People, ſaying, *The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee*, &c. Numb. 6. 23. So *Simeon*, *Levi* and *Judah*, *Iſſachar*, *Joſeph* and *Benjamin*, were appointed to ſtand upon *Gerizzim*, to bleſs the People, *Deut.* 27. 12. Or elſe by an extraordinary Spirit of propheſie. So *Jacob* bleſſed his Sons, when he told them what ſhould befal them in the laſt dayes, *Gen.* 49. And *Balaam* propheſying the proſperity of Iſrael, is ſaid to have bleſſed them altogether, *Numb.* 24. 10.

4. To Bleſs, is to make bleſſed, to give as well as ſpeak a bleſſing. So Iſrael was bleſſed effectually, *Numb.* 22. 12. *Curſe them not, for they are bleſſed.* Thus there are Bleſſings *ſpiritual*, and Bleſſings *temporal*; Bleſſings of basket and ſtore, *&c.*

5. To bleſs, is to ſet apart from a common, to a holy and ſpiritual uſe. So Chriſt bleſſed the Bread, when he ſet it apart to ſignifie his Body, *Mat.* 26. 26.

Now when Chriſt bleſſed his Diſciples, the four laſt

of theſe acceptions of Bleſſing may very well be comprized and intended. The geſture uſed in bleſſing them, lifting up his hands, may well ſuit with pronouncing of a Bleſſing in way of prayer. The Gifts and Graces poured on them ſoon after his Aſcenſion, ſpeak the efficacy of his Bleſſing, and that it was not empty words, but Spirit and Life. And it is evident, that at his Aſcenſion, he ſet them apart, and gave them a Commiſſion to go and preach the Goſpel.

Other Texts might be cited, proving that Chriſt's Aſcending, did εὐλογεῖν, ſpeak well to his Diſciples, as *Mark* 16.17,18,19. and *Acts* 1.8,9. But the Text ſo fully aſſureth us, that Chriſt lifted up his hands, and *bleſſed*, juſt at his Parting and Aſcenſion, that we need no other Confirmation.

To come then to the Reaſons why Chriſt Aſcended, bleſſing.

The two main ſprings whence his Bleſſing flowed, are his Love and his Faithfulneſs; which two were the reaſons of his Humiliation and Tranſactions. He loved his Elect; and He was faithful to him that appointed him, *Heb.* 3.2. Out of Free-grace and Faithfulneſs He laid down his Life a Ranſome for many; *He loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own Blood*, *Rev.* 1.5. His Father had appointed Him, and promiſed Him to bleſs, and he faithfully performed it. He came to bleſs, and went to Heaven bleſſing.

There are eight ſpecial Reaſons or Ends which Chriſt had in his eye, in bleſſing his Diſciples ſo ſolemnly, when he was leaving Earth to go to his Father.

1. He would aſſure his Diſciples, that his affection to them, was the ſame now at parting, as they had found it from his firſt chooſing them: they might have thought it ſtrangeneſs, had he gone, and not left a Bleſſing behind him, after all his kindneſs and compaſ-

ſion.

ſion. And this is one end, to which are directed all thoſe gracious and comfortable Expreſſions, recorded in the, 12, 13, 14, 15, & 16*th* Chapters of *John*, with that pathetical Prayer, *John* 17. ſhewing him as tender-hearted towards them at laſt, as ever. He diſplayeth his Banner of Love over them in this gracious Valediction, going to Heaven Bleſſing.

2. Jeſus Chriſt would have his Diſciples, and all that ſhould believe in his Name, to know that he carried the ſame Heart to Heaven with him, that he had on Earth; ſo that though his bodily preſence was removed, yet his Love continued, and he would be as mindful of them in his Kingdom, as ever he had been on Earth. And this is another End of his gracious Expreſſions at, and a little before his Aſcenſion: He knew how ready they might be, through weakneſs and temptation, to queſtion his care, and doubt of his Love; (as the Iſraelites about *Moſes*, *Exod.* 32. *As for this Moſes, we wot not what is become of him*) He would not have them think, Now Jeſus Chriſt is gone, and his Mercy is at an end, he hath forgotten to be gracious,—— and ſo ſink in deſpairing thoughts. No, He aſſureth them, *John* 16. 26. *I ſay unto you, I will pray the Father for you*; reſt ſatisfied, queſtion not but I will remember you, and ſet you as a ſeal upon my Heart, as a ſeal upon mine Arm; I will carry your names engraven on my Breſt-plate, and make interceſſion for you; and here he would aſſure them of laſting Love, in parting from them with the moſt notable expreſſion of it. He *ſolemnly bleſſed them.*

3. Jeſus Chriſt would have his People aſſured, that he is the *Meſſiah*, the promiſed Seed, *in whom all Nations ſhall be bleſſed*, *Gen.* 18.18. The Apoſtle mentioneth this Covenant with *Abraham*, *Acts* 3.25,26. and ſheweth that Chriſt came to bleſs, in purſuit of that Covenant,

Covenant, and to fulfil Scripture. It was propheſied of Chriſt, *Pſal.72.17. Men ſhall be bleſſed in Him:* And Bleſſing was his beginning and concluſion in his Miniſtry upon Earth; the beginning of his firſt Sermon, and the cloſe of his Laſt.

4. He bleſſed them, that he might not leave them overwhelmed with grief, nor ſwallowed up of ſorrow at his departure. *John* 14.1,18,27. *I will not leave you comfortleſs; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*:—He knew the loſs of his Preſence might ſtrike cold to their hearts.

The Children of the Bridechamber might mourn; alas, the Bridegroom is taken away; they might cry after ſo good a Teacher and Maſter; *My Father, my Father, the Horſemen of Iſrael, and Chariots thereof*:—and ſorrow moſt of all, that they muſt ſee his face on Earth no more. Well, The Lord God had given Him the Tongue of the Learned, to ſpeak a word in due ſeaſon, to him that is weary, anointed Him to comfort them that mourn; and he giveth his Diſciples a Cordial, to keep them from ſwooning and fainting, ſomething to allay their grief, and bear up their hearts; they could ill let him go, except he bleſs them; and He giveth them a rich Legacy, *My Peace I give unto you, John* 14. 27. and here a Bleſſing which proved very effactual to turn their *grief* into *Joy:* For it followeth in the next verſe after my Text, *They returned to Jeruſalem with great Joy.*

5. Jeſus Chriſt would have all his People know, That He will pour down Showrs of Bleſſing on his Church and People to the End of the World. This Bleſſing at his parting, ſhall prevail on all Ages, to the ſtrong Conſolation of Believers: The Efficacy of it abideth, and ſhall be on the head of *Joſeph*, on the top of the heads of ſuch as are choſen out of the world.

Chriſt's

Chriſt's good Will was not only to his Diſciples, *but alſo to all that ſhall believe through their word*, John 17.20.

6. Jeſus Chriſt aſcended, Bleſſing, that he might arm his Diſciples againſt Perſecutions and Difficulties, which they muſt afterwards encounter: He knew they muſt meet with much Contradiction in preaching of the Goſpel, that they muſt ſeal his Truths with their Blood, and drink of the Cup which he drank. And to animate them, he will have them eye-witneſſes of his Aſcenſion; and (as *Elijah* let his Mantle fall on *Eliſha*) he lets a Bleſſing alight upon them.

7. The Lord Jeſus would declare, That he hath taken away the Curſe from his People, and hath Authority to bleſs. *Gal.*3.13,14. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us, that the Bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.* Chriſt by his Death and Sufferings, hath turned the Curſe into a Bleſſing, blotting out the hand-writing againſt us; and (as Conquerours uſe to give gifts, ſo) He in his Aſcenſion gave and pronounced Bleſſings among his People: It was his Coronation Day, the Day of the gladneſs of his heart, he was entring into his Ivory-Palace with gladneſs, where all the Hoſt of Heaven muſt aſcribe Glory to Him; And He will have ſome of his *Oyl of Gladneſs* run down upon his Members here on Earth.

8. Laſtly. Jeſus Chriſt would well fill up all Relations in which he ſtood to his Diſciples, and be as good and better in point of Love and Faithfulneſs, in ſuch Offices and Relations, than ever any was.

Four ſorts of Offices and Relations uſed to bleſs, eſpecially at parting.

1. Parents did bleſs their Children; ſo did the godly Patriarchs, and *Job*, and *David*, &c.

2. Maſters

2. Masters their Houſholds and Servants. *Abraham* bleſſed his Servant, *Gen.*24.7.

3. Kings and Rulers bleſſed their People; *Moſes*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah* and *Eſther*, prayed for their People. *Melchiſedec* King of *Salem*, bleſſed *Abraham*, Gen. 14.18. *Bleſſed be Abraham of the Moſt High God.*

4. Eccleſiaſtical Officers, Prieſts and Levites, and Prophets under the Law. *Melchiſedec*, Prieſt of the Moſt High God, bleſſed *Abraham*:—And Miniſters extraordinary and ordinary, under the Goſpel, bleſs People.

Now Jeſus Chriſt ſtood in ſuch Relations to his People; He is their Father, *Iſa.*9.6. & *Heb*,2.13,14. and puts the Bleſſing of a Father on them; their Maſter, and bleſſeth the Houſhold of Faith; Their King, and fulfilled that Type of *Melchiſedec's* Bleſſing, *Heb.* 7.1, 6. As Prophet and Prieſt, yea, Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, at his entring into Heaven, he with hands lift up, imparteth a Bleſſing on his People.

I come now to make ſome uſe of this point.

And firſt, Seeing the Lord Jeſus went to Heaven bleſſing his Diſciples, let us all learn of him to bleſs, and not curſe; yea, to *bleſs them that perſecute us*, Rom. 12.14. Here you have an exact patern, the beſt Teacher, follow his ſteps: *Render not railing for railing, but contrariwiſe, Bleſſing; for ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a Bleſſing*, 1 *Pet.* 3.9. Here is a fair Copy to write after, a good Leſſon, well becoming true Chriſtians: When Chriſt was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, 1 *Pet.* 2.23. His laſt farewel was *Bleſſing.* Alas, Chriſtians, we know not what ſpirit we are of, for trivial injuries, ready to be calling for fire from Heaven, and to have our tongues full of deadly poyſon, and ſet on fire of Hell: *Therewith bleſs we God even the Father;*

ther; and therewith curſe we man, made after the ſimilitude of God: Out of the ſame mouth proceed bleſſing and curſing. My Brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be, Jam. 3. 8, 9. 10. O conſider for the moderating of our ſpirits and tongues, Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered Contradiction of ſinners, was ſpit upon, and had the higheſt injuries and greateſt affronts offered him; and though he could have commanded twelve Legions of Angels to have aided him, yet he came as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, and opened not his mouth; nay he prayed, *Father forgive them, Luke* 23. 34. His own Diſciples ſhewed a great deal of unbelief and diſobedience, forſook him in the hour of darkneſs, and had many ambitious thoughts, and much ſelfiiſh diſcourſe, yet his Love covered a multitude of faults, ſo as he bleſſed them at parting: O let the ſame mind be in you that was in Chriſt, be *meek* and *lowly*, be *courteous* and *pittiful*, *forbearing* one another, and *forgiving* one another, as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven you; Let the Fruits of the Spirit, Love, and Peace, and Meekneſs, be found in you, and abound.

2. *Uſe.* Chriſt going to Heaven, ſolemnly bleſſing, ſhould teach us, to expect all Bleſſings from Heaven only through Chriſt; and that all the Bleſſings of the New-Covenant are diſpenſed by the hand of the Mediator; only in him ſhall men be bleſſed. Mens bleſſings are but blanks, cyphers, vain and of no value, except Chriſt bleſs; There is that bleſſeth himſelf in his wickedneſs, *ſaying, I ſhall have peace,* Deut. 29. 19. but in vain; *God's anger will ſmoke againſt that man, There is no peace to the wicked. The wicked flattereth himſelf,* Pſal. 26. 2. *but his iniquity will be found to be hatefull.*

There *are that bleſs the covetous, but the Lord abhoreth them,* Pſal. 10. 3. A ſorry bargain, to have men acquit,

acquit, and the Lord held guilty; mans bleſſing will ſtand in little ſtead when the Lord ſhall ſay, *Depart ye curſed*: It is not in all the creatures to render him a bleſſed man whom Chriſt doth not bleſs.

To proceed; *There is no bleſſing to be had from God but only through Chriſt.* Chriſt is the *Emmanuel* through whom there is *peace* on Earth, *and goodwill towards men*: he is the true Mercy-Seat with the wings of the *Cherubims* ſpread over it, whence the Lord will commune with his People; He is the true *Jacobs Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven*, from the top whereof the Lord declareth he is his Peoples God, and will be with them in all places whitherſoever they go, *Gen.* 28. 12. 13.— We read, *Ruth* 4. 5. At what time the Kinſman muſt have the inheritance, he muſt have it at the hand of *Ruth* (to allude hereto) You can never inherit the Bleſſing unleſs you be eſpouſed to Chriſt. *Ye ſhall not ſee my face* (ſaid *Joſeph*) *except your brother be with you.* So here, no ſeeing the face of God with comfort, nor prayer heard, nor perſon accepted, nor ſin pardoned, no ſouls reconciled, no Bleſſing obtained but through Chriſt; Prayers are but as howlings, if they be not put up in the Name of Chriſt the only Mediator. Read *Heb.* 12. 18. *&c.* you ſhall find the miſery of ſouls without Chriſt, but their happineſs being come to the Mediator of the New-Teſtament: Out of Chriſt we have to do with God from Mount *Sinai* in thunderings and lightnings, in tempeſt and terrible voices; but through Chriſt from Mount *Sion*, whence better things are ſpoken than *Abels* blood ſpake. So, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. *&c. Without Chriſt, and afar off, without God, having no hope, ſtrangers to the promiſe; But through Chriſt made nigh, reconciled, fellow-citizens with the Saints, of the houſehold of God, the partition-wall broken down, he is our peace. God is a terrible*

Judge

Judg, a conſuming Fire to men out of Chriſt, but in him a Gracious Father, reconciling this world to himſelf, not imputing iniquities: *Epheſ.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings*—— But how? or for whoſe ſake? Why, in Chriſt, only on his account, *In him we have redemption, the remiſſion of ſin,* ver. 7. *God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you,* Epheſ. 4. 32. Jeſus Chriſt is the Light of the world, without which darkneſs, horrour and perpetual confuſion had been upon all mankind; the onely Foundation to ſtand againſt Hell gates; no other Name given whereby we can be ſaved. The way by which we draw near to God with hope to ſpeed, is conſecrated through his blood; the grand encouragements we have in our addreſſes to God, are Chriſt's Merit and Mediation. Jeſus Chriſt is the only door at which God giveth his dole of Bleſſings, and by which we can enter into the Fathers preſence and favour; He is the gate of Heaven, *He is all in all.*

My dear People, The time of my departure from you, not voluntary, but conſtrained, ſeemeth now at hand; poſſibly I am ſpeaking the words of a dying man, and may ſee your faces no more in this place; 'tis my comfort I have not kept back any thing that is profitable for you, nor ſhunned to declare to you all the Counſel of God; But have (to my ability) taught you to obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded; for ſo runs my Commiſſion, *Mat.* 28. 20. And let me tell you, I dare not exceed, knowing that terrible Commination, *Deut.* 18. 20. *The Prophet that ſhall preſume to ſpeak a word in my Name, which I have not commanded him to ſpeak, even that Prophet ſhall die.* And *Mat.* 5. 19. *Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the*

Leaſt

Least in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Scripture tels me what things I muſt teach and exhort; *And if any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Doctrine according to Godlineſs; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting, &c.* 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Could I find the things which (it is probable) are ſhutting the mouths of many hundreds of *learned, conſciencious Miniſters,* expreſſed in, or by good conſequence to be drawn from the Scriptures (which I am ſure are ſufficient to furniſh the Man of God throughly to every good work, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17.) I would not for a World diveſt my ſelf of the Liberty of my Miniſtry, nor bereave my ſelf, my wife and little ones of our Livelihood; nay, I would willingly practiſe them, and teach you ſo to do; I this day appeal to the moſt High (with the Prophet, *Jer.* 17. 16.) As for me I have not haſtened from being a Paſtor to follow thee, O Lord thou knoweſt; Moſt gladly would I have continued preaching Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, furthering your Faith and Joy, and driving on the great Marriage between Chriſt and your Souls: but ſure I am, my Lord needeth not my ſinning to carry on his Work amongſt you, neither will I charge him with unfaithfulneſs, nor his Word with deficiency in pretending to mine own faithfulneſs in the Miniſterial Function; but I'le patiently commit my ſelf to Him that judgeth righteouſly, endeavouring to follow his ſteps, who became *poor*, that we might be made *rich*, and ſuffered greater things for me than I can do for him; On Him I deſire to be found, waiting and keeping his Way, who hath the giving of the Opening of the Mouth, and is thereby known to be the Lord, *Ezek.* 29. 21. He *that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and ſhutteth, and no man openeth*, can, if he pleaſe, reſtore our Liberties and pleaſant things; if not, here am I, let

let him do what is good in his ſight, The Will of the Lord be done.

Why ſhould I part with you, repining or murmuring at a churliſh unkind World, whilſt it is evident the World hated him before it hated us, and my Text tels us that Chriſt bleſſed his Diſciples at his parting and Aſcenſion?

Now the Lord Chriſt who went to Heaven, bleſſing, bleſs you this day with the beſt of Bleſſings, the ſure Mercies of *David*, and laſting Benefits of the everlaſting Covenant! The Lord Jeſus, the good Shepherd, who gave his Life for the Sheep, be your Shepherd, and cauſe ſhowers of Bleſſings from Heaven on your Souls, Bodies, Children, Families and Eſtates; And God, even the Father, for Chriſt's ſake, grant, that you and I, who are this day parting with grieved hearts, may at laſt meet with joy, having all tears wiped from our eyes, and every ſad thought taken from our hearts; to be ever with the Lord, at whoſe right-hand are pleaſures for evermore. And God the holy Ghoſt abide with you and me, to guide us into Truth, to ſtabliſh us in the Truth, and comfort our hearts unto the end of the world! *The Lord be with you all.*

And are we parting? Suffer I beſeech you this word of Exhortation. *In the laſt day, that great day of the Feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cryed, If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink*, John 7. 37. The Apoſtle at *Troas* ready to depart the morrow, preached long at his parting with the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, who muſt ſee his face no more; how fervently did he preach and pray? *Acts* 20. Two of *Luthers* wiſhes were, That he might have *ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh*, and *have heard Paul preach*. But my Brethren, what tongue can expreſs the worth of their *Farewel-Sermons!*

Though I be a weak earthen veſſel, a reed ſhaken with the wind, yet, ſhall not my mouth be open, and my heart enlarged when I muſt preach to you no more? And am I leaving you? My Beloved and longed-for, how gladly would I leave you all in the Arms of Jeſus Chriſt? Shall I leave any of you wedded to your ſins and luſts? Shall I leave any of you glued to the world, and not eſpouſed to one Husband, even Jeſus Chriſt? Shall my liberty to preach Chriſt to you, ceaſe, before you can all ſay of him, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his?* O that (if it were the will of God) it might not be ſo! *Brethren, my hearts deſire and prayer for you is, that you may be ſaved:* My earneſt requeſt and ſuit to you this day is, that you will come to Jeſus Chriſt, and be married to him for ever: Have pity upon me, (cryeth ſorrowful *Job* in another caſe) *Have pity upon me, O ye my friends, the Hand of the Lord hath touched me:* Have pity upon me, O my People, have pity upon your afflicted, grieved, dying Paſtor. And this is the pity I crave at your hands, that you would none of you reſt in a Chriſtleſs condition, but expect Bleſſings and Bleſſedneſs only through Chriſt, that whether I come again to you, or be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye prize and love Chriſt fervently, that ye obey him ſincerely, conſtantly, and univerſally, having reſpect to all his Commandments; that ye ſet a high eſtimation, and ſtick cloſe to his Truths; that ye abhor Evil, and account Goſpel-adminiſtrations glorious; that ye ſtand faſt in the Faith, and abound in every Grace.

Unum erat, &c. ſaid *Monica* to her ſon *Auguſtine*, *It was one thing for which I deſired to live a little longer, that I might ſee thee a Chriſtian ere I dye:* So ſay I to you this day (whoſe cheeks I ſee bedewed with tears) If my heart deceive me not, I deſire my Natural and Civil life a little longer, that I might ſee you *Iſraelites indeed*,

indeed, and grown in Grace. I ſeek not yours, but you, O my Flock; I labour not to draw you after me, but after Chriſt. So far am I from murmuring at this ſad providence, exerciſing me this day, that I bleſs God (who bringeth good out of evil) that hath given ſo many of his Miniſters opportunity and hearts to confute thoſe Scandals, caſt on them by unſtable ſouls, of being *Hirelings, Baals Prieſts, greedy Dogs; Balaams, loving the wages of unrighteouſneſs; Diotrephes, and loving preheminence; preaching for filthy lucre; ſuppoſing Gain to be Godlineſs, &c. from whom men ought to withdraw themſelves.*— Let ſuch as are guilty anſwer as they can; *Let Baal plead for himſelf.* We are ſure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth againſt them that commit ſuch things: That God, who hath ſo far rouled away our Reproach, can in his due time make our Righteouſneſs ſhine forth as the noon day. Only my *Beloved*, let me not have cauſe to take up ſuch ſad complaints of you, *that I have beſtowed on you labour in vain; that I have piped, and ye have not danced; that I have mourned, and ye have not lamented; that ye have not believed my report; that ye will not come to Chriſt, that ye might have life; that I come in my Fathers Name, an Embaſſador in Chriſts ſtead, and ye receive not my Meſſage; but if another come in his own name, him ye will receive: that ye are eaſily perverted, marvelous ſoon ſhaken* (See *Gal.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.) *and your minds corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt, to fall in love with will-worſhip and empty things of mans deviſing; but will not be converted, nor fall in love with Chriſt, nor take his yoke upon you:* Good People, add not thus to my affliction, but let me have joy of you, that I may ſay, *Ye are my Crown and Rejoycing*; Now I live, ſeeing my Peoples ſouls are alive and proſper, and have their hearts eſtabliſhed with Grace, ſo as they cleave with *purpoſe of heart unto*

God, escaping the temptations and pollutions of the world, and running, like the River *Arethusa*, through the salt Sea, yet keep their sweetness, and the Word of God abideth richly in them.

Monica Leapid for joy at *Augustine's* conversion, *Cumulatius*, &c. *My God hath done abundantly for me, that I see thee his Servant.* So let me have cause to rejoyce, and say, My God hath granted my desire, letting me see you that were serving divers lusts, serving the Lord Christ; and you that were dead in sin, spiritually alive; and you that were Swearers, fearing an Oath; and you that were lost, found; And you that were haters of Holiness, following Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Sirs, think not that Angels, or some from the dead should ever come to invite you to Christ, and testifie these things, neither may you expect Christ himself in bodily presence to preach to you; when he was on earth, *He went about doing good*, calling sinners, *Come unto me, Follow me; If any man will be my Disciple, let him follow me*: but now his work is in Heaven, where he is about his Peoples Business, pleading their Cause.

Nay, you may not expect me to be preaching to you any longer, but once more I am here tendering to you Jesus Christ; I come a wooing in behalf of my Lord and Master, *who was dead and is alive, and behold he liveth for evermore*: In his Name who was preaching of old by his Spirit in *Noahs* time, to souls that by their obstinacy and disobedience are in prison, in Hell, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. I come to tell you, that *Except you Repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; and *except you believe, ye shall be damn'd*, Mark 16. 16. that unless you obey Christ, ye will fall short of eternal Salvation; and if ye have not the Son, ye have not Life. I come to tell you,

you, of your poverty and blindneſs, of your nakedneſs and miſery without Chriſt, that all your hope will periſh, unleſs it be built on Chriſt the Corner-ſtone, and that you can obtain no Bleſſing but through Chriſt.

'Tis recorded, that *the dead that Sampſon ſlew at his death, were more than they whom he ſlew in his life.* To alude to it, O that this my dying Sermon, might ſhake the rotten pillars on which ſouls have built their hopes of Heaven ſhort of Chriſt; that more ſins might be mortified, and more ſouls quickened and converted than ever by any Sermon in the courſe of my Miniſtry; that now at the end of the liberty of my publick Miniſtry, you might all be the ſeals thereof, being pricked to the heart, and feeling the weapons of our warfare mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.

Joſeph's Brethren thought evil againſt him, but God meant it for good, to ſave much People alive. And O that this ſad breach betwixt us this day, might occaſion ſome poor ſouls to ſay, *Periiſſem niſi periiſſem*, I had been undone if I had not been undone. The ſmiting of the Shepherd, and ſcattering of the Sheep, was the occaſion of a Sermon that enlightened me, quickened me: This breach brought me to Chriſt, acquainted me with my neceſſity of intereſt in Chriſt. I am not of the temper of that Emperour, who ſaid, ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήσεται πυρί, *when I dye, let the Earth be burned*; But O that my Civil Death might miniſter occaſion of your Spiritual and Eternal Life! O that this divorcing day betwixt you and me, might be the day of your Eſpouſals to Chriſt!

Dying *David* beſpeaketh *Solomon*; *I go the way of all the Earth*: — *Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, that thou mayeſt proſper*, 1 Kings 2. 1, 2, 3, 4.

My loving People, I am this day going the way of all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, the way of tribulation. I charge you keep the Lord's way; as you expect any bleſſing and proſperity, look for them only through Chriſt the Way, the Truth and the Life. I charge you before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge both quick and dead (as the Apoſtle, when his time of departure was at hand, charged *Timothy*) that ye reſt not without *Intereſt in Chriſt*; and I leave this *Sermon* (as *Joſhua* did the Pillar) as a Memorial, that I admoniſhed and beſought you to come to Chriſt, and become his Servants. O let not the Word I have ſpoken, to keep my ſelf pure from your blood, condemn you in the day of Chriſt. You cannot plead, We were not bidden to the Wedding-Feaſt, we were not called to Chriſt; No, if you be found out of Chriſt at that great day, how will it torture you to conſider, *How have we hated Inſtruction, and have not obeyed the voice of our Teachers?* In vain may you wiſh, O that we had the day of Grace once again!

Domine cur non modo, &c. ſaid *Auguſtine* at his converſion, *Lord, why not now an end of my filthineſs?* So ſay I to you, Why not now a parting with ſin, and cloſing with Chriſt?

Take theſe *Conſiderations* or *Motives*.

1. The Lord Chriſt calleth you, whilſt we are teſtifying theſe things to you; Whilſt *Noah* was preparing the Ark, Chriſt was preaching; *See that ye refuſe not Him that ſpeaketh from Heaven.*

2. Others who have had as great hindrances as you have, followed Chriſt at his Call. *James* and *John*, *Mat.* 4. 22. left the ſhip and their father immediatly, and

and followed Christ; neither enjoyments, nor imployments, nor relations could hinder them. *Zacheus*, a rich man, of low ſtature, in a great preſs, yea, of a wicked Sect, a *Publican*, great obſtacles; yet he breaketh through all, he runs and climeth to ſee Jeſus. If you come not to *Chriſt*, you will be inexcuſable.

3. Let the Lovelineſs of Chriſt draw you; he is the Roſe of *Sharon*, the Lilly of the Valley, the bright and morning Star, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and altogether lovely: O let his Fulneſs and Perfections win your hearts, and attract your affections.

4. *Let the Love of Chriſt conſtrain you*; his condeſcending and dying for you, to ſave you from everlaſting death: Will not ſuch bonds of Love hold you?

5. The Lord taketh exact notice how long your Teachers are labouring with you; what means you have, and what fruit appeareth. *Theſe three years have I come, ſeeking fruit*, *Luke* 13.7.

6. You muſt ſhortly appear before the Judge, to give account how you have profited by all the Sermons and Lectures you have heard, *&c.*

7. Now is the Ax laid at your roots, Judgment begining at the houſe of God; your Teachers ready to be removed into corners; poſſibly you may go from Sea to Sea, and not find that refreſhing food for your ſouls, nor thoſe advantages which you have had: Now therefore, what mean you, O ſleepers? are you ſet on fire round about, and not lay it to heart! Let the time paſt of your life ſuffice you to have been ſervants of ſin; It is high time for you to awake out of ſleep and to follow Chriſt.

8. If you will not come this day, what if the Lord ſhould write you Chriſtleſs, and ſwear in his wrath,

You shall never enter into his Rest, nor taſt of his Supper, ſaying, *I would have purged you, and ye were not purged*; never be purged, dye in your ſins; *he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill?*

9. Chriſt is willing to be yours, if you will be his; he will not reject you if you come; you have as fair Encouragement to come as ever any had.

10. They are very fair terms propounded: Is it not fit you ſerve him, if you expect him to ſave you; that you obey him, if you hope for his Salvation? Had he bidden you do ſome great thing, ſhould you not have done it? how much more when he requireth nothing but what is your reaſonable ſervice, befitting you as his Creatures? They are fair terms, *Repent and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out; Come to me and find reſt: Believe in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved: Be faithful unto death, and obtain the Crown of Life.*

11. And laſtly, Let your neceſſity drive you to Chriſt. Is there but one Ark in the world to ſave you from drowning? but one City of refuge to keep off Vengance from you? O hie thither apace. Is there but one day-Star to ſhine into your hearts? but one Son of Righteouſneſs, *with Healing under his wings?* but one Sacrifice for ſin accepted? *But one Mediator betwixt God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus?* O get intereſt in Him: Oh! why do any of you linger, and not haſten to this *Zoar*, when Fire and Brimſtone are ſo nigh, ſo certain to all that reject Chriſt? Oh! why do you draw back, when drawing back is unto Perdition? Know my Brethren, theſe things as much concern you as ever any ſouls in the world; what need have you of Chriſt, to be your Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption? without Him you are curſed, captivated and condemned, *John* 3.18.36. without

out Christ ye are deaf and dead, poor and polluted, and have no title to Heaven, to the Promises, nor any thing but sin and its wages, *Death*: Nay, if you obey not whileſt Christ calleth, *Come unto me*, you muſt with horrour hear that other voice, *Depart ye curſed*:—*Thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould rule over them, bring forth and ſlay them before me.*

Let me hint to you on what terms you muſt be, in your coming to Chriſt.

1. You muſt be divorced from your ſins; make ſure you take off the heads of your deareſt luſts.

2. Diſclaim all other Saviours beſides Chriſt; renounce *confidence in the fleſh*, *Phil.* 3. 3. reſt not in your outward priviledges nor performances; but when you have done all you can, ſay, *We are unprofitable ſervants.*

3. Reſt not in a bare notion of Chriſt; take heed leſt you ſit down with Fancy inſtead of Faith.

4. Take a whole Chriſt, Chriſt to rule you, to teach, to ſanctifie you as well as ſave you.

5. Give your ſelves wholly to Chriſt, without reſerve; give him your ear open to his Calls; his Sheep hear his Voice, and know not the voice of ſtrangers; give him your eye; look unto him and be ſaved: give him your hand and feet, to do what he commandeth; and come when he calleth: give him your knee to bow to him (not meerly in a complement) but to ſubmit to his Laws, and obey him as King and Lord: eſpecially give him your hearts, let him be enthroned there; *Lift the everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may enter. With the tongue you muſt confeſs, and with the heart believe, that you may be ſaved.* And take him for yours for ever; abide for him for many dayes. Beware of Apoſtacy, by which *Judas* loſt the Bleſſing, and went to his own place.

You

You see Brethren al blessings are to be expected only through Christ. I beseech you go home and work these things on your hearts by meditation: wrestle for a Blessing; say Lord Jesus, who blessedst thy Disciples, bless me, even me also; I will not let thee go unless thou bless me; cry to him (as the blind, lame, and diseased cryed when he was on earth) *Jesus have Mercy on us*; and believe that he is able, willing and ready to bless you. *As for me, God forbid I should cease to pray for you, that the Lord would put his Blessing on you.*

One thing further let me mind you of, That you be much in blessing God for his Love and Faithfulness, in giving his Son, and ascribing Blessing and Praise to the Lord Jesus; for all spiritual Blessings, and for going to Heaven blessing his People: Especially I charge you, be careful to spend the Lords Day, which is precious time, which he hath sequestred; and set apart for himself, in a thankful Commemoration of Jesus Christ, his Grace and Compassion to poor sinners, and not in sports and past-times: study what you shall render to him in lieu of such superlative and incomparable Love; and in a due Sanctification of the Lord's Day, endeavour that the Name of Christ may be remembred through out all Ages.

The third and last *Use*, is, *Consolation*; for I would not leave you comfortless.

1. Here is abundant Encouragement to poor sinners to come to Christ: you that have trembling hearts, and dare scarce look up to Christ, by reason of your sins, lest he call you Dogs, and cast you out; who are ready to say, There is indeed Consolation in Christ, and he hath Blessings enough to bestow, but they are not for me; let me tell you, it is good to be humble and sensible of your own vileness, but not to be faithless and unbelieving; for unbelief is highly derogatory, dishonourable

diſhonourable to Jeſus Chriſt, and wrong to your own ſouls, a rejecting of your own mercy: I could alſo tell you, it is the moſt unreaſonable thing for you, to queſtion Chriſt's pitty and tenderneſs towards poor, heavy laden ſinners, after that he hath from Eternity, had his delights with the ſons of men, *Prov.* 8. 31. And in *Noahs* time he was preaching to ſave ſouls, would they have *believed and obeyed*. He ſent all his Prophets of old, to teſtifie remiſſion of ſins to all that *believe in Him*, Acts 10. 43. The Prophets teſtifie his tenderneſs. Conſult, *Iſa.* 55. the ſeven firſt verſes, *Ho, every one that thirſteth—He will abundantly pardon. Iſa.* 40. 11. *He ſhall gather the Lambs, and carry them in his boſome.* Iſa. 42. 3. *A bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break,* Iſa. 61. 1, 2, 3. *He hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted.* Ezek. 18. 23. *Have I any pleaſure that the wicked ſhould dye?* Pſal. 72. 12, 13, 14. *He ſhall ſave the ſouls of the needy.* You have his own Teſtimony, *John* 6. 37. *Them that come to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* You have the Experiences of the Saints recorded for your encouragement: The Apoſtle *Paul*, who was a Perſecutor, and confeſſeth himſelf the chief of ſinners, yet he obtained Mercy. The thief upon the Croſs (though before he reviled Chriſt) yet praying, obtained a very gracious Anſwer. Nay, conſider, what Chriſt hath done to ſhew himſelf, in good earneſt, to ſave ſouls: He knew what a bitter Cup he muſt drink, yet, *Loe I come*; he became our Surety, and longed to have our debt paid, and his People redeemed, *Luke* 12. 50. He was wondrouſly ſtraitned, till his Baptiſm of Blood was accompliſhed: He hath ſent his Apoſtles after ſuch ſignal Manifeſtations of Grace to teſtifie it.

And in his Name, my Beloved, I am this day declaring to you, That he is very willing and ready to receive any that will *come* to him, *and would gather you*

as

as a Hen doth her Chickens under her wings; never did any find him backward; nay, He is more willing to bleſs you, than you are to receive his Bleſſings. It's ſome ſatisfaction when men will come, *that he may ſee the travel of his ſoul*, *Iſa.* 53.11. He taketh it ill, that we are ſo backward in coming. He loved the young-man that came running, kneeling, enquiring, *Good Maſter, what ſhall I do?* &c. and had the young-man liked the terms, the match had been made, the breach was not on Chriſt's part. Nay, *Luke* 15. he ſheweth, there is joy in Heaven over one repenting ſinner, in three Parables. Draw near then thou drooping dejected ſoul, come and ſee, not only the Hands and Feet of thy Saviour; put not only thy hands into his pierced Side, But behold the heart of thy Redeemer! behold thy Lord lifting up his Hands and Bleſſing; and ſee if there be not ground to cry out, *My Lord, and my God*: Had you ſeen Him after ſweating drops of Blood for you, aſcending with ſuch Expreſſions of hearty Love, could you have doubted? Had you ſeen his Hands lifted up in bleſſing his People on Earth, at his laſt farewel, could you doubt of his willingneſs to bleſs you?

2. Here is Comfort for the People of God, amidſt all the Curſes and Perſecutions of the world; *Be not afraid*; no matter who curſe ſo Chriſt bleſs, *Pſal.* 109. *Let them curſe, but bleſs thou.* Chriſt's Bleſſing is your Pavilion from the ſtrife of tongues. For *firſt*, Chriſt bleſſeth effectually, *Pſal.* 37. 22. when Chriſt will bleſs, men cannot let. *Secondly*, Irrevocably. When Chriſt bleſſeth men cannot reverſe it. *Balaam* could not curſe *Iſrael*, when God had bleſſed. The Bleſſings of Chriſt are without Repentance. Men now cry *Hoſanna*, anon *crucifie*; but they whom Chriſt bleſſeth, ſhall be bleſſed everlaſtingly. *Thirdly*, He bleſſeth ſuch as bleſs his Servants, and curſeth them that curſe them,

Gen.

Gen. 12.3. *Fourthly*, He bleſſeth his People for mens curſing, 2 *Sam.* 16. 12. *Fifthly*, He turneth the Curſe into a Bleſſing, *Deut.*23.5. *Sixthly*, He hath variety of Bleſſings, Bleſſings of the Dew of Heaven, and of the Deep. *Eſau* cryed, *Haſt thou but one Bleſſing; bleſs me alſo, O my Father.* But Chriſt's Bleſſings are an Ocean, never exhauſted: He is a Sun, full of Light, after ſo many thouſand years emanation of Bleſſings, and irradiation of the World therewith, he is as full as ever; He is a Fountain always flowing, and ever full. He hath national Bleſſings, pardon of ſin, and peace, and plenty, *Zech.*3.8,9,10. The whole 72 *Pſalm* ſets out Chriſt's Bleſſings.

Would you have a Land rid of Idolatry and Hereſie? *Zech.* 13. 2. After the Promiſe of Chriſt, as a Fountain open, the Lord engageth, the names of Idols *ſhall be forgotten*, and the falſe Prophet, *ſhall paſs out of the Land.* Would you have bleſſings on a Congregation? Good Teachers and all their abilities and ſucceſs are from Chriſt, *Eccleſ.*12.11. *Epheſ.*4.11.12. *He hath a Bleſſing for the habitation of the Juſt.* Prov. 3.33. *Riches and Honour are his.* Prov.8.18. *All freſh Springs are in him:* He hath plenty of ſpiritual Bleſſings, being the ſtore-houſe of his Church, where it pleaſed the Father that all fulneſs ſhould dwell. From him flow *Acceptance*, Epheſ.1.6. *Juſtification and Pardon*, Mat. 9. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 11. *Sanctification*, Acts 3. 26. *Illumination*, Col.2.2. *All the Treaſures of Knowledge are hid in Him, and He openeth the eyes of the Blind: He is the Author and Finiſher of Faith, full of Grace; by Him we have Adoption of Children*, Epheſ. 1. 5. Theſe are rich Bleſſings. Moreover, through Chriſt we have *intereſt in the Promiſes*, 2 Cor.1.20. and right to all our *Comforts and Priviledges*, 1 Cor.3. 22, 23. *All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's.* Briefly,

Through

Through Christ you have *Everlasting Blessedness*, *Heb.* 5.9. Rejoyce then in Christ Jesus, O ye Upright, ye are the blessed of the Lord, who went to Heaven blessing. Read over your Charter & Priviledges through Christ; what is there wanting that heart could wish, for your selves, your Children, this life, or a better?

Yet consider further with me, *Christ went to Heaven blessing*; and Acts 1, 11. *In like manner will he come again.* How will Christ, do you think, bless his People at his second Coming? What a joyful meeting will there be of the Lamb and his Spouse, decked and adorned with Graces? how will he welcome his *Bride* when he cometh again, to receive her to abide with him, who left her whilest full of spots and wrinkles, so kindly? he then took a few apart, and blessed them; but then at his second Coming, *Gather my Saints together*, Earth and Sea must give up their dead, and never a Saint be lost, but raised at the last day. Christ blesseth *Be*lievers at death, receiving their souls, making their bodies rest in hope; but at His appearing he will bless them, with a glorious Resurrection, making their vile bodies like his glorious *Body*, *Phil.* 3. 20. Saints bodies shall then be *glorious*, *spiritual*, *strong* and *incorruptible*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43, 44. No more hunger and thirst, nor cold and wearines; no more crying nor saying, I am sick, nor pain, nor death, Christ will set them at his Right hand, and bless them with a sentence of Absolution, *Come ye blessed of my Father.*

Well may the afflicted Church on earth, tossed with tempests, cry, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*; Oh! what a time of refreshing shall that be? Act. 3. 19. how shall the Saints then sing *Halelujah: Blessing, Honour and Praise be given to the Lamb, and to Him that sitteth on the Throne?*

O joyful Day, when our Lord Jesus, who went to Heaven

Heaven *With his Hands lifted up in Bleſſing*, ſhall come to carry his People bleſſed, triumphantly in Heaven! *Into the hands of this Lord Jeſus, I commit you my Dear People.*

SERMON XI.

by Mr. John Oldfield. Carrington. Derbyshire

Pſal. 69. 6.

Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hoſts, be aſhamed for my ſake; let not thoſe that ſeek thee, be confounded for my ſake, O God of Iſrael.

The Pſalm, for the main ſubſtance of it, is *Davids* prayer for deliverance from the grievous oppreſſion of his cruel enemies; yet it ſo relates to *David*, that many paſſages do alſo reſpect Chriſt (of whom *David* was an eminent Type) ſo the *9th* verſe is applied, part of it, *John* 2. 17. and the reſt of it, *Rom.* 15. 3. and ſo may more paſſages in it be applied.

This Petition for deliverance (whether you refer it to *David* or Chriſt) is,

1. Propounded in the beginning of the firſt verſe, *Save me*——.

2. Proſecuted and urged with divers Arguments, whereof the *firſt* is drawn from the greatneſs of the calamity under which he lay, *ver.* 1, 2. *Secondly*, From his long waiting and earneſt crying, his throat dried, his eyes fail, *ver.* 3. *Thirdly*, From the number and nature of his enemies, more than the hairs of his head, and they very malicious and injurious, hating him cauſeleſly, forcing him to unjuſt reſtitution. Under which alſo is couched a *4th* Argument, *viz.* his own innocency as to the matter wherof he was accuſed, and for which he was hated and perſecuted, *ver.* 4.

Not-

Notwithstanding which innocency of his as to the particulars wherewith he was charged by men, he yet justifies God in permitting these evils to befal him; for this I take to be part of the sense of the 5th vers. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness*—— and therefore I cannot justifie my self before thee, nor accuse thee of injustice for permitting it to be thus with me. Though the words may seem also to look another way, *viz.* to be *Davids* appeal to God concerning his innocency in those particulars, *q. d. Thou Lord who knowest my foolishness, from whom my sins are not hid*, knowest my innocency in the things whereof I am accused. By the way take this *Note*.

Obs. *When men oppress and persecute most unjustly, yet there is cause to justify God in suffering it to be so.* God's Justice is executed upon us by their injustice; if men falsly accuse us, yet God can truly charge us. When *Job* had to deal with men, he will maintain his integrity against their accusations, chap. 27. 4, 5, 6. but when he hath to deal with God, he acknowledgeth his sin, will not stand upon his own justification; he will not plead, but supplicate, chap. 9. throughout. The Prophet *Jeremiah* grants the conclusion, chap. 12. 1. though he desiers to debate with God about the prosperity of the wicked, and about God's permitting them to oppress and trample upon his People. If any of God's People think they have hard measure from men, that they are wrongfully and injuriously handled as to some particular, yet let them eye God, and consider their carriage towards him, and they shall find cause enough to say, as *Ezra* 9. 13. *Thou hast punished us lesse than our iniquities deserve*. It may seem hard that the poor Messengers of Christ, who desired nothing more but libery to speak to souls that they might be saved, and have daily bread; should be de-

prived of this liberty & livelyhood, upon such grounds as were not necessary to be imposed by others, of which they themselves cannot submit to, without losing the peace of their conscience, and credit of their Ministry; yet who so innocent that he cannot see reason enough to justifie God? alas, there is so much unfaithfulness, luke-warmness, negligence, laziness, and a thousand other miscarriages to be found in us, as may abundantly justifie God in this dispensation, though he seem to spit in our faces, and to lay us aside as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure.

But to come to the Text. It may be considered either with relation to what goes before, and to the scope of the Psalm, and so it is an argument enforcing the Petition for deliverance, drawn from the ill consequence which would follow, if God should permit his enemies thus to insult, *viz.* that hereby the Godly would be ashamed and confounded, they would stumble and take offence at his sufferings. Or it may be considered absolutely, and so the Text is a Petition, That God would prevent that sad consequence of his sufferings, by his seasonable deliverance, or some other way.

In the words thus considered, observe, *first*, to whom the petition is directed, *viz.* to God, described by a double Title, the one of Majesty, *Lord God of Hosts*; the other of Mercy, *God of Israel.*

2. For whom it is made, and that is the Godly, described by a doudle practice of theirs, *viz. those that wait on God*; and *those that seek him.*

3. The matter of the Petition, and that is, That such *might not be ashamed and confounded.*

4. The motive that induced him to make this Petition, or that which gave occasion of it, and that is included in those words [*for my sake*] or (as the

Original) *in me*: that is, because of my grivous sufferings and calamities. The words are plain, and need no further opening.

Divers observations would arise from each branch, but I shall only name three.

Observe, 1. *God's People are waiters on, and seekers of God.* This I pass by.

2. *The long and grievous afflictions of God's eminent Servants are apt to stumble and confound others, even the truly Godly.*

3. *A Gracious soul fears, and prays against the evil influence that his sufferings might have upon others.*

The second of these I chiefly aim at, in prosecution whereof I shall, 1. Shew that it is so. 2. What it is that men stumble at in the Saints sufferings. 3. Whence it comes to pass.

1. That it is so, Scripture abundantly bears witness, and experience confirms it.

Did not *Job's* Friends sadly stumble at his sufferings? (though not in being ashamed and confounded, yet) in censuring and condemning him for an hypocrite, as appears in their debates with him? As *David was well nigh gone*, and *had almost slipt* at the consideration of his own sufferings, and the wicked's prosperity, *Psal.* 73. 2, 13, 14. so he declares that others were stumbled upon the same account, even his People *i. e.* the People of God, ver. 10. But what need we multiply instances when we have one in stead of all, *viz.* the sufferings of Christ himself; at which not only others, but even his Disciples and Apostles themselves did sadly stumble? *Peter* denies, and forswears him, others of them stager and question whether he was (what he had declared himself) the Redeemer of *Israel*, *Luke* 24. 21. *all forsake him. The Sword awakes against the Shepherd, and the Sheep are scattered,*

ſcattered, Zech. 13.7. Thus it hath been in all ages of the Church; though I deny not, that the blood of the Martyrs hath been the Seed of the Church; yet that Seed hath not ſprung up ordinarily till following ages, as for that preſent age wherein they ſuffered, their falling into troubles did cauſe others to fall off, and depart from them. The Croſs hath been, and will be a Stone of ſtumbling and a Rock of offence to many: men will ſhun that way wherein they ſee others plunged, and ſticking in the mire. Therefore hath the holy Ghoſt laid in much for the prevention of this miſchief. This ſeems to be the ſcope of Pſalm 37. & 73. To this purpoſe are recorded both dreadful threatening againſt thoſe that ſhould be aſhamed of Chriſt or his Members in their ſufferings, ſuch as *Mark* 8. 38. and alſo precious promiſes to thoſe that ſhould boldly own, and openly profeſs him, *Mat.* 10. 32. *Luke* 12. 8. all which intimate that there is a propenſity in the beſt to fall into that ſin. Hence it is that the Apoſtle cautions his *Theſſalonians* that none of them ſhould be moved by his afflictions 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 3.

Let me only ſubjoyn this here (which I deſire you to carry along with you through my whole diſcourſe) That all do not ſtumble in the ſame kind, ſome are weakned and diſcouraged, and ſo either fall off, or play *Nicodemus* his patt; others having promiſed themſelves a fair gale of proſperity which ſhould waft them over ſafe, & ſpeedily to the heavenly ſhoar, when they ſee others toſſed with an *Euroclydon*, conflicting with the winds and waves, ready to be ſwallowed up, or daſht in pieces upon the rocks of affliction, make a retreat, reſolving to venture no further upon that tempeſtuous ſea; ſo *Demas* and others in *Pauls* time. Some again ſtumble by paſſing hard cenſures upon thoſe whom they ſee too meet with hard meaſures in

the world —— Theſe and divers other wayes, which we ſhall occaſionally touch upon (though the Text points cheifly at one way) do men ſtumble at the ſufferings of the Godly.

2. Let us enquire what it is that men ſtumble at in reference to the Godlies ſufferings, and we ſhall find chiefly three things, all which may be fairly implyed in the Text.

1. Sometimes men (even the Godly) ſtumble at the perſons ſo afflicted, are ready to think hardly of them (as *Jobs* Friends of him) becauſe God deals hardly with them. How ordinary is it for men to paſs harſh cenſures upon thoſe that fall under heavy afflictions? and there's good reaſon, for there being upon every mans heart an indelible impreſs of God's vindictive Juſtice they know the [τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ] *Rom.* 1. 32. the Judgement of God, and that he is the Judge of the world, to inflict puniſhments on offenders; knowing alſo that this Righteous Judge cannot, will not pervert Judgment; hence they conclude, that thoſe ſo ſeverely and ſignally puniſhed, muſt needs be guilty of ſome grievous enormities, or monſtrous impiety; a clear inſtance we have in the cenſure thoſe *Barbarians* paſſed upon *Paul*, when they ſaw the *Viper* leap and faſten upon his hand, *Acts* 28. 3, 4. Now this impreſſion of the Divine Juſtice, remaining upon the Godly (as being indeed a part of their ſanctification) they ſometimes forgetting that afflictions are the portion of God's People, and that they are part of the childs portion, are ready to judge thoſe to be none of God's Children who are thus afflicted. Nor do men this way only ſtumble at the perſons of the Godly in afflictions, but (which is more ordinary) they are ſhie of owning them, ſtand at a diſtance from them, forſake them. See *Pſal.* 69. 8. 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. This was our Saviours

Saviours own caſe, *Iſa.* 52. 14. & 53. 23. All in *Aſia*, even *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes* turned away from *Paul*, 2 Tim. 1. 15. *Oneſiphorus* is almoſt the only man who was nor aſhamed of his Chain, verſe, 16. — It is ſo in any kind of affliction.

Tempora ſi fuerint, nubila ſolus eris.

But one of the ſaddeſt kinds of ſtumbling in this reſpect, is, when thoſe that ſhould be *Comforters* turn *Cenſurers*; when the Godly joyn with the Wicked in cenſuring their afflicted Brethren, as ſuffering out of *obſtinacy* and *perverſneſs*, becauſe their conſciences are not of the ſame latitude with their own: yet how ordinary is it? If the conſcience of a poor Chriſtian have a more quick and lively ſence of humane impoſitions, be more tender of violating Oaths, of corrupting God's Worſhip by mens Traditions; of doing things which are doubtful, or carry in them an appearance of evil; though he never ſo patiently ſit down under his ſufferings, yet he ſhall be whiſpered about as either an ignorant, ſcrupulous, or obſtinate fool, even by thoſe who profeſs to own the power of Godlineſs, though in theſe reſpects taking to themſelves a greater latitude, both for their principles and practice. This, O this (next the ſence of God's wrath) is one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of the Godlies afflictions; yet they often meet with it: And againſt this we may reaſonably think that *David* prayes in the Text, *viz.* that the Godly might neither cenſure, nor be aſhamed of him, becauſe of his ſufferings.

2. Sometimes men ſtumble at the way and profeſſion of the Godly; (which follows upon the former) they take up hard thoughts even of Godlineſs it ſelf, when it goes hardly with the Godly: thus *David* becauſe of his own ſufferings begun to think his piety vain, *Pſal.* 73. 13.

Though the Word hath expreſly told us, that we muſt *through many tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God*; and men (in *Theſſ*) in the general believe it, yet when ſufferings befall themſelves, or others, for Holineſs-ſake, they forget that Word which ſpeaks to them as to Children, *Heb.* 12. 6. they conclude that is not the right way which is ſtrewed with ſo many croſſes, and therefore turn out of it. Hence *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 125. 4. *The rod of the Wicked—— leſt the Righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity, q.d.* Even the Righteous are apt, by long and grievous afflictions, to be turned out of the way of Righteouſneſs, and to turn aſide into crooked wayes (as ver. 5.) therefore God will take care to prevent it, by a ſeaſonable deliverance of his People. How many have turned their backs on Chriſt, when they have ſeen others carrying his Croſs upon their ſhoulders? The ſtory of that King of *Morocco* is ſufficiently known, who would not be baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, becauſe he ſaw many poor and ragged creatures who, he was told, were the ſervants of Chriſt. Men will ſhun that Road upon the Sea, where they meet with many pieces of Ships ſplit upon the Rocks; nor will they take up a Calling, the Profeſſors whereof are generally poor & beggarly. Doubtleſs the ſufferings of the Godly occaſion in many a prejudice againſt Godlineſs, in ſome a turning from it. Againſt this therefore we may rationally conclude *David* to pray in the Text, *viz.* that as none might miſjudge his perſon, ſo neither his profeſſion, becauſe of his afflictions.

3. Sometimes men ſtumble at the weakneſſes of the Godly in their afflictions: if they ſee them never ſo little deſpond, or faint, or any way waver, not conſidering the greatneſs of their troubles, nor allowing thoſe grains they ought to humane infirmity: one

dead

dead Fly, a cowardly carriage, or act of ſlaviſh fear or ſinful compliance in a Godly man, ſhakes and ſtumbles others: there is indeed a ſcandal given in ſuch miſcarriages which is the great ſin of thoſe that give it, yet others ſhould be careful not to take it: offences of this nature will come, while men are men, encompaſſed with humane infirmities; but bleſſed are they that are not offended at ſuch things. Some ſuch thing is intimated in that of *Solomon*, *Prov.*25. 26. *A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain, or a corrupt ſpring.* A learned Commentator gives this ſenſe: *A righteous man falling down*— that is, *improborum, ſive illecebris, ſive comminationibus, fraude aut vi ab officio depulſus:* one that's drawn or driven from his duty by the flatteries or threats of the wicked; ſuch a one is like a troubled Fountain, or corrupt Spring, that is hurtful to others: As a poiſoned fountain is a publick miſchief, poiſons all the ſtreams that iſſue from it, and all thoſe that drink of it; ſo the miſcarriages of ſuch ſtumble and offend many, grieve ſome, and pervert others. When a Pillar of the Church is ſhaken, it muſt needs unſettle thoſe that lean upon it: Such a one was *Peter*, *Gal.*2.9. and you know that not only the *Jews*, but even *Barnabas* himſelf was drawn away with his diſſimulation, *ver.*12,23. This then may be the ſenſe of *David's* Petition in the Text. Lord let me not by any weakneſſes, or deſpondent carriages, caſt a ſtumbling-block before them that fear thee. The ſenſe of the Petition is well expreſt in the ſinging *Pſalm.*

Cartwright.

Let no man doubt, or ſhrink away,
for ought that chanceth me.

Thus you ſee at what men are apt to ſtumble, in reference to the Sufferings of the Godly.

3. Let us enquire whence it is that men are thus

apt to ſtumble, what may be the reaſon of it. Take three.

1. *Reaſ.* From that carnal tenderneſs, and ſinful ſelf-love, which is deeply rooted in every mans nature. Men are loth to undergo hardſhips themſelves; and therefore take up hard thoughts and ſiniſter opinions of thoſe that do: the fleſh ſhrinks at Sufferings, and therefore they ſhrink from thoſe that ſuffer, leſt they ſhould be neceſſitated to ſuffer with them. From this principle it was that *Peter* diſwaded our Saviour from ſuffering, *Mat.* 16.22. as appears by our Saviours reply, *ver.* 24,25. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me. q. d.* I perceive *Peter* what thou driveſt at, 'tis care of thy ſelf more than me that ſuggeſts this counſel, thou wouldſt not have me lead in Sufferings, leſt thou ſhouldſt be compelled to follow, but I tell thee, it muſt be ſo; both thou and all others that will follow me, *muſt take up their Croſs, &c.* It is hard to drag the Carcaſs to the Priſon, to the Rack, to the Flames; therefore men (though otherwiſe good) are willing to think thoſe in an errour, or elſe too heady and raſh in owning the Truth, that expoſe themſelves to ſufferings, eſpecially upon the account of ſome ſmaller Truth: if they ſhould conclude ſuch to be in the right, they muſt needs ſhip in the ſame bottome, and run the ſame hazzard; hereupon the fleſh for its own ſecurity, finds ſome fault in thoſe forward Sufferers wherewith to cloak its own backwardneſs.

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vaſto.——

2. This ſtumbling at the Godlies ſufferings, proceeds from want of due conſideration of what the Word of God ſpeaks, as to the ſtate of the Godly: the Word is very plain and poſitive; Chriſt hath not dealt as an Impoſtor, but hath told us the worſt, as well as the beſt

beſt of Chriſtianity, *Mat.* 16. 25. he hath told us of forſaking *houſes, lands, &c. Mat.* 10. 17.—of being *delivered up to Councils, ſcourged, caſt out of the Synagogues, brought before Governours, &c.* So Acts 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. Yet when it comes to it indeed, we do not ſo ſeriouſly conſider theſe things, nor remember them, either as to our own or others ſufferings, as we ought. This was the caſe of the Apoſtles when our Saviour ſuffered: he had expreſly foretold them of his ſufferings, *Mat.* 16. 21. yet they were ſlow of heart to believe; which he upbraids them with, *Luke* 24. 20, 25, 26. Compare that Text, *Mat.* 17. 22, 23. where he tells them, *The Son of Man ſhall be betrayed*; and they were exceeding ſorry, with *Luke* 9. 44, 45. where he tells them the ſame things, and (ſaith the Text) *They underſtood them not*, it was hid from them, *and they perceived it not.* So Mark 9. 32. How ſhall we reconcile theſe Texts? the one tells you, *They were exceeding ſorry*; the other, *That they underſtood it not*: I deny not but they may relate to ſeveral times, for our Saviour did often inculcate this upon them; yet methinks this may be the ſence: they did underſtand his words, and the meaning of them, and were thereupon affected with ſome preſent flitting ſorrow; but thoſe things did not, (as our Saviour bids they ſhould, *Luke* 9. 44.) *ſink down into their ears*; they did not, as *Mary*, lay them up, and ponder them in their hearts: the effect theſe things had upon them, were but like the effects of ſome *Romantick Tragedy*, that excites ſome preſent affections, but leaves no laſting Impreſſions; ſo that when Chriſt came to ſuffer, theſe things were as much out of their thoughts, as if they had never been ſpoken; they had ſuch deep and radicated apprehenſions of Chriſt's earthly Kingdom, that they forgot all he ſpoke of his Death and Sufferings. Thus it is two

often

often; a notion indeed we have of ſufferings, being the lot of God's Children, but we are wofully wanting when it comes to the Application, either in reference to our own or others condition; and often we are ſo taken up with poring on ſome temporal conditional promiſe of comfort, or deliverance (which we miſtake for abſolute) that we are ready to conclude our ſelves, or others, to be none of God's Children, becauſe ſuch a promiſe is not fulfilled to us, or not in our time: this may be a ſecond cauſe of mens ſtumbling at the Godlies Afflictions.

3. It may alſo proceed from hence, That good men do with an eye of ſence, pore upon the Sufferings of the Godly, but do not, with an eye of Faith, look either at the gracious Promiſes annexed to them, or the bleſſed Iſſue wherewith they are attended. Obſervable is that expreſſion of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17, 18. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,* —— *While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen.* That is it indeed which makes the Godly account their own or their Brethrens Sufferings, light, momentary and inconſiderable, *while they look*, &c. —But while men pore altogether on their ſufferings, no wonder if they are ſtumbled, and take offence: Now this is too ordinary, the beſt are immerced in ſenſe, and are incomparably more affected with things objected to ſenſe, than thoſe which are the objects of their Faith: they look at what the Godly ſuffer, this their ſences inform them, but they conſider not what they do now, or hereafter ſhall enjoy, that's the proper act of Faith. This occaſions ſtumbling both wayes: For as to the wickeds proſperity, men look at what they have in the world, and thereuppon pronounce them happy; but they conſider not that their diſhes are ſauced, and their drink ſpiced with the

wrath

wrath of God; that they have their portion in this life, *Pſa* 17. 14. which is nothing but a bellyful of Gods hid treaſure; that they have here their good things, and muſt hereafter be tormented, *Luke* 16. that they ſtand in ſlippery places, *Pſal.* 73. 17. and ſhall be ſuddenly tumbled into deſtruction. And then as to the Afflictions of the Godly, men look on what they ſuffer, and accordingly judge them miſerable, but they conſider not how often they are pronounced *bleſſed who ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake*; or what precious Promiſes are made to them; what reviving Cordials are laid in; or what a Crown of Glory is laid up for them: this is that which makes many miſtake and miſ-judge. We conſider *Job's* afflictions, but not the End of the Lord: We are apt to look on the dark ſide of a Chriſtian, and to take notice how he is ſcorcht with the Sun of afflictions, but do not obſerve his inward Comelineſs: his Sufferings are in the eye of our ſenſe, but the preſent Promiſes made to him, or the future Recompences laid up for him, are not in the eye of our faith; and this cauſes ſad ſtumbling.

Theſe may ſuffice as Reaſons of the Truth. I now proceed to Application, which (omitting many other inferences) ſhall be only this; to caution you againſt this miſcarriage.

USE.

That which is *David's* Petition to God here, I ſhall make mine to you; and what he deſires of God, for the Godly, in reference to his Sufferings, I ſhall deſire of you all in reference to my own and my Brethrens Sufferings at this day: The ſum of my Caution, Counſel or Requeſt, is, That all of you, whethers friends or enemies to us, will take heed you be not offended in us, or any way ſtumble at our Sufferings. I am bold to go a little beyond the limits of the Text,

Text; for whereas it only ſpeaks of their ſtumbling that are truly Godly, and that only by being aſhamed and confounded; I extend my Caution to all, both godly and wicked (for if the Godly, much more the wicked are apt to ſtumble, and therefore need cautioning) and to all wayes of ſtumbling, and taking offence, ſo as thereby to offend God: Let none therefore upon the account of our Sufferings, ſtumble either at our perſons, by diſowning or miſ-judging us; or at our way, by thinking worſe of it; or turning from it, or at any weakneſſes you may poſſibly diſcover in us, ſo as thereby to be diſcouraged, and fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs: Theſe things I might reſume and proſecute, but I ſhall rather chuſe to direct my Caution to ſuch as are Enemies, and then to Friends; to the Wicked, and then to the Godly, that I may (if the Lord pleaſe) remove thoſe ſtumbling blocks, at which both the one and the other are apt to fall and miſcary, when I have firſt given you an account of the Reaſons which enduce me at this time to give in this Caution or Counſel.

1. I am afraid, leſt by ſtumbling at our Sufferings, you ſhould loſe the benefit of the Doctrine we have delivered. It was *Pauls* fear, *leſt he ſhould run, or had run and laboured in vain.* Blame us not if we fear the like: 'Tis true indeed, if we have been ſincere, our labour cannot be loſt as to our ſelves, we have delivered our own ſouls, our work is with the Lord, and our Reward with our God; we are to receive our Reward not according to our ſucceſs, but Sincerity: but our fear (Beloved) is as to you, leſt you ſhould have *received the Grace of God in vain:* Should you now ſtumble, and take offence at our Sufferings, it might undoe what hath been done in and upon you by our Labours; Were there no more in it, but our ſuffering

in

in our names or eſtimation with you, I think I ſhould have either wholly forborn, or but lightly touch'd upon this matter; but the danger is yours, you may loſe as to your ſouls; prejudice againſt your perſons, upon the account of our ſufferings, may be prejudicial to the effect, that the Doctrine we have delivered might have upon your hearts.

2. I am afraid, leſt Religion and the Cauſe of God ſuffer. As to our perſons, 'tis a ſmall matter what you or others ſay of us; 'tis a ſmall thing to be jugded of you or of mans judgement: count us what you pleaſe, let us be as Reprobates: only we would not that the Cauſe of God ſhould ſuffer, that Religion ſhould be wounded; this we fear leſt you ſhould ſtumble in, or turn from the Way which we have endeavoured to lead you in: May you but ſtand faſt in the Faith, and preſevere in practical piety, then though we be offered up upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, we ſhall joy and rejoyce with you all: but if you ſtumble at our Sufferings, as to diſlike Holineſs, to diſ-eſteem the ſweet and good Wayes of God, it will be a bitter ingredient in our Cup.

3. I am afraid leſt you ſhould loſe the benefit of our ſufferings; Beloved, 'tis not for our own ſakes only that we ſuffer, 'tis for your benefit, that you may be comforted & confirmed. Read 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your Conſolation & Salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame Sufferings which we alſo ſuffer.*——Should you take offence and be diſcouraged, or otherwiſe ſtumbled at our Afflictions, you would loſe that advantage you might otherwiſe get by them; yea, that which might be to your benefit, would then become your bane and ruine. Upon theſe and the like enducements, let me reſume to preſs the Caution upon you all. I ſhall rank you under two Heads.

1. One

1. On one hand, Such as are already prejudiced againſt our Perſons and Miniſtry, that have ſtood at a diſtance, and would not come in, nor comply with our Endeavours for your good; I beſeech you, let not our Sufferings heighten your prejudice, or give you occaſion to charge, cenſure, or condemn us: I ſee divers things at which you will be like to ſtumble in this kind; give me leave to remove ſome of them.

Firſt, You will be ready to ſay (nay, it is already ſaid by ſome) That we are juſtly buffeted for our faults, that it is nothing but what we deſerve, as having been buſie, cenſorious, and pragmatical Fellows; making diviſions and ſeparations amongſt our People; taking upon us power to ſuſpend you from the Lord's Table, admitting and excluding whom we pleaſed; exerciſing a power more arbitary than ever the Biſhops did: this is a Prejudice deeply rooted in the hearts of many. To which I ſay;

1. We wil in part own the Charge, we wil not juſtifie our ſelves before the Lord, but will ſay as *Nehemiah*, *Nehem.* 9. 33. *Thou, O Lord, art Righteous.*——There is ſin enough in us to provoke the Lord thus to deal with us.

2. Yet we have cauſe to bleſs the Lord, that you have no worſe things to lay to our charge, that you cannot write drunkards, looſe, debaucht, unclean profligate Perſons, upon our doors, when we are gone. I hope we ſhall not in the thoughts of thoſe that are moſt prejudiced againſt us, ſuffer as *Theeves*, *Murderers*, *Evil-doers*, nor juſtly be charged, *as buſie bodies in other mens matters*, 1 Pet. 4. 15. It will not I hope be lookt upon as preſumption, if we take up *Samuels* Apology, 1 Sam. 12. 3. *Whoſe Oxe have I taken?* —— Or *Pauls*, *Acts* 20. 33. 2 *Cor.* 7. 2. that we have not been rigid exactors of that which was our own, much-

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leſs required that which was not our own, both our, and I hope your Conſciences will bear us witneſs.

3. As to that which the generality of our People have taken moſt offence at, *viz.* Our Strickneſs about the Sacrament; *Firſt*, Have we done more than our Commiſſion warrants us? Have we not often told you the danger, That *to eat and drink unworthily, is to eat and drink your own Damnation*? Can you blame us if we have at once conſulted your and our own ſafety? Will you quarrel or cenſure us, becauſe we would not give you that which, in the ſtate you were, would be to you a Cup of Poyſon, and would certainly aggravate your Damnation? Forgive us this wrong. But, *Secondly*, Who hindred or deprived you of that Ordinance? was it not your own fault? Have you not been exhorted and entreated to come to us, that you might be inſtructed, and fitted for that Ordinance? yea, if you thought it too much to come to us, have we not offered upon the leaſt invitation to come to you for that purpoſe? know you not that the *Prieſts lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge*, Mal. 2.7. and that you ſhould *ſeek the Law at his mouth*? yet we have ſought to you, and intreated that you would not refuſe inſtruction, but with many of you have prevailed nothing: nay, have we not often urged you with this conſideration, That your abſenting your ſelves upon the account of your ignorance, would be no excuſe? that as it is a great ſin to come without preparation, ſo to refuſe thoſe helps whereby you might be prepared to come. You have been told, That it was the duty of every one profeſſing Chriſtianity, to commemorate the Death of Chriſt in that Ordinance; and that it was an undervaluing, and a high Contempt of Chriſt and his Benefits, wilfully to withdraw. That in the ſight of God, your willingneſs to come in your ignorance and prophaneſs, and

your

your refusing to come because you might not come in that state, was as if you had so come; and that God look'd upon you as profaners of his Ordinance, because you would have done it if you might: so that I hope you will have no just cause to blame us in this particular. What other motive I pray you can be rationally imagined, should enduce us to this severity, but fear of sinning against God, and of wronging your and our own souls? had we not been convinced of our Duty, and the Danger of neglecting it, we could have been content to have purchased your favour by a general Admission. As for other Crimes charged upon us; as preaching *Sedition*, intermedling with *State-Affaires*, *&c.* I shall only intreat that you would review our Sermons, consider our Course of Preaching (which for the most part, hath been upon Catechetical Points) and see if there be any just cause to fasten such a Charge upon us.

2. But it will be said, If we suffer not for our former faults, yet it is for our present fault that we suffer: we may if we please submit and continue in our Places, it is our *wilfulness* and *obstinacy*, fear of losing *credit*, *adherence* to a party, &c. that exposes us to suffering. To this I must not make a full answer, nor shall I reflect upon what is done by Authority; I acknowledge it my duty to obey passively, and suffer patiently, where I cannot with a good Conscience yeeld active Obedience. Yet to hint something.

1. I beseech you seriously to consider, whether it be probable that a man out of meer obstinacy, or the like principle, should expose himself to such *hardships* as we are like to undergo? which of you would do it? make it but your own case, and you will soon discern the unreasonableness of this charge. Consider but what Obligations are upon us to continue in our Places

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and Miniſtry, and then ſee how probable this harſh cenſure is.

Twofold Obligation.

Firſt, *Sacred.*

1. Conſcience of Duty to God, and to the Souls of our People; that is a religious tye upon us, which nothing in the world, but the avoiding of ſin can free us from: Beloved, think not that I or my Brethren make it a light matter to lay down the Exercile of our Miniſtry (I ſay the Exerciſe; for as to the Office it ſelf, none on Earth can deprive us of it.) I know that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. *A neceſſity is upon me*—— I remember that of our Saviour, *Luke* 9. 62. *No man having put his hand to the plow* — It is not the heavieſt burden (were it a burden only, not a ſin) nor the greateſt meer inconveniencies that ſhould drive me from my Station. I well remember when I entred into this ſacred Function, I promiſed not to lay it down, till I ſhould lay down the Tabernacle of this Body: and I deſire to look upon it as a high dignity which the Lord hath conferd upon me, *had I been but a Door-keeper in the Houſe of God*, &c. Pſal. 84. 10. But as to my Obligation, you ſee how ſacred and inviolable it is. Now my Brethren, you muſt needs conclude him to have little conſcience, or ſence of duty left upon his ſpirit, who can out of meer humour and wilfulneſs, ſhake off ſuch an Obligation: And this, Beloved, is my hope and confidence, as to my ſelf, and many of my Brethren, that, ſhould we out of a ſurly humour (or the like principle) out-run our Embaſſy, our own Conſciences would raiſe a ſtorm as effectual to reduce us, as that which brought back *Jonah* to *Nineveh*, when he fled to *Tarſhiſh*: Conſcience of Duty would, I hope, ſoon work out obſtinacy and frowardneſs.

Secondly, *Civil.*

1. But ſuppoſe this Obligation could be ſhaken off, there is yet a *Civil Tye*, which one would think might be ſufficient to hold us, and that is, *Proviſion for our ſelves and Families*; Can it be imagined, that a man would out of meer wilfulneſs, expoſe himſelf and family to Poverty and Beggary; it may be to Impriſonment or Exile? if one or two ſhould be ſo deſperately obſtinate, yet that ſo many hundreds (yea, if reports be true, ſome thouſands) ſhould do it, is a thing attended with the higheſt improbability, and thoſe, ſuch (at leaſt ſome of them) as for Parts, Piety, Prudence, and other moral and religious accompliſhments, are not *inferior* to any in the Nation: ſurely ſuch a cenſure muſt needs argue ſuperlative uncharitableneſs in thoſe that paſs it. You cannot judge us to do what we do, on meer humour & wilfulneſs, but you muſt conclude us to have put off all ſenſe of Duty to God, and your Souls, all Humanity and Care of our ſelves and Families, and in that reſpect to be worſe than Infidels; in a word, to be Sons of *Belial*, Men of moſt wretched and profligate Principles and Practices: which if you do, remember that, *With what Judgment you judge others, your ſelves muſt be judged of God.*

2. But give me leave to put you in mind, That the things for which we ſuffer, are of that nature, that ordinary Chriſtians are little able to judge of, and therefore ſhould not raſhly judge us for them. Some of them are ſuch as I muſt not mention; nor ſhall I trouble you with many things. To inſtance in the buſineſs of *Re-ordination*, or taking a new Ordination at the hands of a Biſhop; How can I, who have exerciſed as a Miniſter for theſe Fourteen years or upwards, now take a new Ordination, in a way (to ſay no more of it) that ſuppoſes me no Miniſter till then

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without *notorious Diſſembling* both with God and Man? Should one of your ſelvs among whom I have exerciſed, urge on me this Dilemma, *If you were no Miniſter before, why did you Exerciſe in that Function, why did you Preach, Pray, and adminiſter Sacraments as a publick Officer in the Church? how will you juſtifie the Baptizing of our Children, and adminiſtring to us the Lord's Supper? If you were, why do you now ſeek a New Commiſſion? is your old Commiſſion expired?* &c. I ſeriouſly profeſs, Beloved, ſhould I ſubmit in this particular, my mouth would be ſtopt, I ſhould have nothing to ſay againſt ſuch an argument. Will you ſay there is no hurt in it? Yes, in my apprehenſion, it is a taking the *Name of God in vain*, a perverting of an Ordinance from its right End, and ſo in effect, making it no Ordinance; beſides that, it is a tacit condemning of the Miniſters of the Reformed Churches, as no Miniſters, becauſe they want Epiſcopal Ordination; and (which is not the leaſt miſchief) it doth, or may give, juſt Occaſion to our People, to queſtion the Validity of all our Miniſterial Actings; and will you ſay this is no hurt?

To inſtance again in the buſineſs of the Ceremonies, we are not the firſt that have ſcrupled them: they have been a bone of Contention ever ſince the beginning of the Reformation; & I fear are like to be while they are thus preſſed. The Queſtion is not, whether men may impoſe the wearing of a White Garment, the making a Croſs upon a Childs Fore-head, &c. but whether men may introduce into Gods Worſhip, and impoſe upon others, ſuch things as are confeſſedly of *humane invention*, annexing them to, or mixing them with God's Worſhip, as being ſignificant of inward Graces, as tending to Edification, and to excite the dull mind of man, or engage him to his duty? Under this Conſideration and for theſe Ends they are impoſed;

as the Preface to the *Common-Prayer-Book* tells you: Mean while it is acknowledged, That neither Chriſt, nor his Apoſtles, uſed or urged theſe things; yet we muſt be impoſed upon, and ſworn to uſe and approve them. I appeal to any rational unprejudiced Chriſtian, whether there be not enough in this caſe to beget a conſciencious doubting or refuſal. Will you ſay they are not forbidden? no more are thouſands of Popiſh Superſtitions, which yet I hope, our impoſers will not approve of: But I muſt tell you, that to mine and my Brethrens apprehenſions, they are forbidden in thoſe general Prohibitions, *Deut.* 12.32. *Prov.* 30. 6. *Col.* 2. 15. (ſurely he that adds to the Worſhip, adds by conſequence to the Word of God) If you ſay, What hurt is in them? I ask, Have they not a tendency to draw men off the ſpiritual Part of God's Worſhip, to reſt in Formalities? do they not bring us into more bondage than the Jewiſh Church, ſince they had a ſtated number of Ceremonies, and thoſe of God's own Appointment; but we, as to the nature and number of ours, are at *mens arbitrement*, and muſt not ceaſe obeying, till they ceaſe impoſing? Do they not prove a ſad ſtumbling-block to the more tenderly, conſciencious Chriſtians? and (to add no more) they muſt needs do hurt in that they do no good: I fear not to ſay, that whatſoever doth no good (I ſpeak of mens inventions) muſt needs be prejudicial and corrupting to God's Worſhip. I hope then you will forbear to throw after us thoſe raſh and harſh Cenſures, as if we wilfully ran our ſelves into ſufferings: I think it a Truth worth our bearing witneſs to by the greateſt ſufferings, *That men ought not to impoſe, nor we ſubmit to humane Inventions in God's Worſhip, when introduced upon pretence of Edification, or engaging men to their duty.* Since ſuch things would reflect upon the Wiſdom of God,

God, as if he had not known how to make his own Ordinances effectual. But I forbear: other Inſtances I might give, but haſten to what remains.

Thirdly, There is yet a third thing which may be an occaſion of ſtumbling and ſinning to the prophane, and that is, They will rejoyce at our ſufferings, becauſe we have ſometimes been Troublers of their Conſciences: They look upon us as peſtilent Fellows, movers of Soul-Sedition, they could not ſwear, or drink, nor oppreſs, &c. but the Pulpit muſt ring of it; they hate us, becauſe we never propheſied good concerning them; and now they are glad not only to be rid of us, but to ſee us *ſuffer, &c.*

1. But let me tell you, It's no good argument of Chriſtianity, to rejoyce in the ſufferings of any, though your worſt enemies. The Command is, *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with them that weep*, Rom. 12.15. *remember them that are in bonds as if bound with them*, Heb. 13.3. How contrary is your ſpirit and practice to theſe and the like Precepts: as for our troubling you, we did it in faithfulneſs to your ſouls. And for our preſent troubles, ſuppoſe it were upon the account of an erroneous Conſcience (which is the worſt that can rationally be ſuppoſed of us) yet ſo long as it is upon the account of Conſcience, methinks it calls for your Pitty and Compaſſion. But,

2. Let me tell you, There's no ſuch cauſe of rejoycing, as you imagine; if you ſin more quietly when we are ſilenced, Conſcience will ſpeak at laſt, the flames of Hell (at furtherſt) will awaken it, and then you will wiſh that you had both enjoyed and improved your faithful Monitors, who out of Love to your ſouls, durſt not but ſpeak againſt your ſins. Beſides our ſufferings preſage you no good: 1 *Pet.*4.17. *If Judgement begin at the houſe of God*—the Cup may paſs from

us to you: When God gives order to begin at his Sanctuary, he intends utter desolation. In *Ezek.* 12.3,4. the Prophet is commanded to remove his stuffe, as one going into captivity for a type to the People. You will see us ere long removing our stuffe, what if this be a type to you? sure I am it is a warning. Let our sufferings be supposed never so just and righteous, yet are there not among you, even among you, sins as heinous and provoking? *Luke* 23.40. *Do you not fear God, since you are in the same condemnation?* Alas poor souls! were you sensible, it would be small joy to you to have your Ministers driven into Corners. But so much to the first sort.

2. I am now to turn my speech to you, whom the Text directly concerns, who look upon our removal as a Judgement; who are burdened for the reproach of solemn Assemblies: there is danger of your stumbling (as the Text intimates) and therefore let me caution you also, Take heed you be not offended by, or stumble at our sufferings; many wayes you may miscarry; it may possibly be a puzling case with you, how to reconcile our suffering in this case with God's Justice; but remember with the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Jer.* 12.1. to hold the conclusion however things go. You may also meet with temptations to call in question the Truth of that Doctrine we have delivered to you, or to doubt whether we have taught you the good and the right Way; but that which is most ordinary, and against which you need to be most cautioned, is, *Lest your hands be weakned, and your hearts discouraged in the Profession of the Truth; lest the Shepherds being smitten, the Sheep be scattered; lest by our Sufferings, you be moved from the Hope of the Gospel.* To prevent which or the like miscarriages, consider;

1. Our Sufferings are not to weaken or discourage, but

to confirm and encourage you: you quite pervert the End of our Afflictions, if you draw arguments of diſcouragement from them. 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your Conſolation*—We are put to lead, that you may the more chearfully follow, if called to it. *Phil.* 1. 14. *Many of the Brethren in the Lord waxed confident by my bonds:* That was indeed a right Improvement of *Paul*'s Sufferings; I mean, not that you ſhould run your ſelves upon ſufferings, or do any thing unlawful or unwarrantable to pull Afflictions upon your own heads. The Serpents wiſdom is commendable when in conjunction with the Doves ſimplicity and innocency; but if the Cup (which ordinarily goes round) be put into your hands, our Example ſhould be your Encouragement to drink it more cheerfully. As for doing any thing (or ſo much as ſpeaking) againſt Authority upon our account, far be it from us to urge you to it: nay, we charge you to keep the way of Duty and Loyalty, to Sovereign Authority; *The wrath of man works not the Righteouſneſs of God:* but if you be call'd out to bear witneſs (as we conceive we now are) to the Truth of God, or the Purity of his Worſhip and Ordinances, then we ſay to you, look on us and do likewiſe: than chuſe rather to ſuffer than ſin. We have preach'd the Truth, and we now are called to ſeal it with the loſs of our Livelihood and Liberty in ſome meaſure. Let not our Sufferings weaken or diſ-ſettle, but rather ſtrengthen your Faith, and heighten your reſolution: our Afflictions ſhould be your Encouragements.

2. Nor ſhould the bitter Scoffs and Reproaches which you may undergo for our ſakes, at all move you: I doubt not you will have the ſcorn as well as the loſs. It will be ſaid to you in way of deriſion, as the Sons of the Prophet ſaid to *Eliſha*, 2 Kings 2. 3. *Knoweſt*

Know you not that the Lord will take thy Maſter from thy head to day? So, know you not that your beloved Miniſter is a going? As they ſaid to *David*, *Pſal.* 42. 10. *Where is now thy God?* So to you, Where is now your Miniſter, whom you almoſt made a God of? This will be a ſword in your bones; ſuch Reproaches added to your loſs, will be ready to break the heart of thoſe who prize their faithful Miniſters, as they ought to do; to whom they are as *Chryſoſtome* to his People, equally neceſſary as the Sun in the Firmament: But it is your part to arm your ſelves with Courage and Patience, and to obſerve that double Rule of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 26. 4, 5. *Anſwer not a Fool* — that is, do not render Reproach for Reproach, or Railing for Railing, nor yet be put beſides your Patience or Conſtancy, which is his deſign: Yet *anſwer him according to his folly* — that is, chide and rebuke him, let him know, that there is no ſuch cauſe of rejoycing in the loſs of a faithful Miniſtry, that he ſhall one day know the worth of that Mercy which now he diſ-eſteems and undervalues.

3. Though it muſt be acknowledged one of God's ſadeſt Diſpenſations, to take away a faithful Miniſtry, to ſend a Famine of the Word; yet this muſt not diſcourage us, ſo as to make us deſiſt from Holineſs: bleſs God that you ever had ſuch a Mercy, and got good by it; bewaile ſin that hath deprived you of it; but take heed you do not upon this account turn aſide, as *Joaſh* when good *Jehojadah* was dead; and as the *Iſraelites* when *Moſes* was gone: rather call to mind what we have ſpoken for your Confirmation, give diligence when we are gone, to have the things in remembrance which you have heard from us: and as an encouraging Word (with which I ſhall conclude) aſſure your ſelves, that even this ſad Providence, is within the compaſs of thoſe things in the Promiſe,

which

which ſhall *work for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8.28. The loſs of a Faithful Miniſter may be ſanctified, to effect that good in and for you, which the Enjoyment hath not. You miſtake if you think we have done Preaching; no, we are only called to preach to you out of the Pulpit of the Croſs; and I hope it may be ſaid of us, as of *Abel*, Heb. 11.4. though we are dead, we *yet ſpeak*: And why may it not be hoped, that our Preaching out of that Pulpit, may be more effectal than out of this? That's a comfortable Word to thoſe that can apply it, 1 *Cor.* 3.22. *Whether Paul— all are yours*; *i.e.* they are ordained for your benefit; all God's diſpoſals of us (whatever you may think) are for your advantage: and through Grace, I ſhall, in confidence thereof, ſay with the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2.17. *If I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your Faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all.* May but my Sufferings attain their end, which is your Conſolation and Salvation, I ſhall through Grace bleſs God, in making uſe of me to that purpoſe: In the mean while, that is a ſtaying Word to my ſoul, *Luke* 13.33. *It cannot be that a Prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem*; that is, be taken away before he hath done his work. I know God is not tyed to one way, he can make our ſilence ſpeak louder and more effectually, than all our Sermons have done.

To conclude then, let me reſume my requeſt to you all; Let none of you ſtumble or take offence at our Sufferings. Let me humbly uſe the Words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Mat.* 11. 16. *Bleſſed is he that is not offended in us.* Let not our Enemies rejoyce or cenſure us; let not our Friends ſorrow as without hope, but let all wait and obſerve the iſſue, and I doubt not but God in his own time, will manifeſt to the world, that his intentions (even in this thing) were good towards his faithful Miniſters, and waiting People: that this

ſhall

ſhall be as a Refiners Fire, and Fullers Soap, *to puriſie the Sons of Levi* : that this ſhall be the *fruit*, eventhe taking away of *Jacobs ſin*, *Iſa.* 27. 9. and that *the Lord will not forſake his People, nor caſt away his Inheritance; but Judgement ſhall return unto Righteouſneſs, and all the Upright in heart ſhall follow after it*, Pſal. 94. 14, 15.

As for the third Doctrine, That a gracious ſoul fears and prayes againſt the evil Influence that his Sufferings might have upon others ; I ſhall, as God enables, put it in practice on your behalf, and ſhall take up the *Pſalmiſts* Words, *Let not them that wait on thee be aſhamed for my ſake, O Lord God of Hoſts : Let not thoſe that ſeek thee, be confounded, for my ſake, O God of Iſrael.*

SERMON XII.

Luke Cranwell, ... Peters, Derby

John 16. 33.

Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace : in the world ye ſhall have tribulation ; but be of good chear, I have overcome the world.

IN the begining of this chapter the Lord Chriſt telleth his Diſciples what they ſhall ſuffer in the world, that when ſufferings came according to his prediction, they might not be offended at, but rather confirmed in the Faith of the Goſpel ; and telleth them the reaſon why they ſhall undergo theſe ſufferings from the world, from verſe 1. to verſe 5.

2. He acquainteth them with his departure out of the world, and that they ſhould want his company and counſel, verſe 5. 6.

3. Yet

3. Yet Christ telleth them it is for their advantage that he goeth away; implying he should do them more good in Heaven than on Earth; especially in sending the Comforter verse, 7. And here he sheweth the Spirits Office, as to the world, from verse 7. to verse 12. Secondly, to them, from verse 12. to vers. 16. and and in the 16th verse he bringeth his discourse to a conclusion.

4. We have the Disciples enquiring after the meaning of this discourse of Christs, from verse 17. to verse 20. To which he answereth, in declaring the sorrow they shall have after his departure, and that it shall end in joy, yea, such joy as they shall not be deprived of, verse 20. to verse 23. *I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoyce.* This coming again was by the Comforter, and when he came they should have joy, because a full return of Prayer, ver. 23. to verse 28.

5. Upon this discourse the Disciples profess their understanding of Christ's meaning, verse 29, 30.

6. You have Christ's discourse upon this, foretelling their leaving of him at his passion, and their sufferings in the world, and the peace they should have in him, from *ver.* 31. to the end.

In the Text observe, 1. Christ's Assertion, That *in the world they should have tribulation.* 2. His Exhortation, To *be of good chear.* 3. The Motive to this, Christ telleth them, *he hath overcome the world.*

Doct. 1. *That Christ told his Disciples, in the world they should have Tribulation.*

Explicat. 1. What is ment by *Tribulation.* 2. What is meant by *shall have.* 3. Who are meant by You, *ye shall have.* 4. What is meant by, *In the world.*

1. What is meant by *Tribulation?* The word in the Original is θλίψιν. θλῖψις the Greek word signifieth

Tribu-

Tribulation, Affliction, trouble, diſtreſs, whether by loſs of eſtate, liberty, &c. It ſignifieth any ſort of tribulation or affliction that is for ones caſting down, *Mat.* 24.21. 1 *Cor.*7.28. *Acts* 14.22. 2ly. The Syriack word, is, *Aulzono*, it cometh of the root *Alaz*, which ſignifieth he hath *forced, conſtrained*, as in *Gal.* 6. 12. And ſo this word is uſed for *Oppreſſion, Perſecution*. And the ſame word is uſed, 2 *Theſſ.*1.6. And ſo here, as appears from the ſcope of Chriſt's diſcourſe.

2. What is meant by, *Shall have?* The word in the Original ἐξετε; the theam is ἐχω. *Shall have*, being the future tenſe, implyeth that the ſuffering was to come. It is not *you have had*, but *ſhall have tribulation*. This you are ſure and certain of. And ſo the Syriack [*how e lkoun*] there, ſhall be to you, it ſhall come.

3. Who are meant by *You?* doth it imply that the Apoſtles, and they only, ſhould have tribulation in the world? or, are we to underſtand it of Chriſtians, or Chriſt's Diſciples in general? *I anſwer*. This diſcourſe is principally to the Diſciples; yet with relation to all Chriſtians that will be ſtedfaſt or conſtant in the Chriſtian Faith. *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. —*And lo I am with you alwayes, &c. i. e.* with you whilſt you live, and with the Miniſters that ſhall ſucceed you in this work to the end of the world. And ſo in this chapter, from ver.22. to 28. is hinted, that Chriſt will by his Spirit give comfort, and a ſpirit of prayer, and gracious anſwers; and though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were proper to the Apoſtles, yet theſe belong to the Church in common, and to Chriſtians in all ages. 2. Chriſt aſſureth his Diſciples, yea, all that ſhould be his Diſciples hereafter, as *Mat.*16.24. that they ſhould meet with the croſs; and ſo adviſeth all that reſolve to be his Diſciples beforehand to prepare for ſufferings. As in *Luke* 14. 25. to the end. And ſo

the

the Apoſtles, *Acts* 14. 22. 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. So that all that will be ſincerely godly, however they may now be free from, yet they ſhall have tribulation.

4. What is meant by, *In the world?* ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Now κόσμος is put for *this world*, in oppoſition to the world or life to come, as *John* 12. 25. and 2 *Cor.* 1, 12.

In the world, is a limitation; it is to laſt only whilſt Chriſtians are upon Earth: it ceaſeth when they leave the world, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. *Now for a ſeaſon ye are in heavineſs.* [*Now.*] And it is ſaid of the Saints, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, &c.* And ſo the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 1. 23. and *Rev.* 21. 4. *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away.* After a Chriſtian hath paſſed over this life, all his Afflictions and Tribulations are over. It is but *in the world*, that is the time and date of them.

Again, *In the world you ſhall have*] It is not all the time you are in the world: though ſometimes the tribulations of the Faithful begin at their converſion, and continue till their death; yet more ordinarily they are but as ſtorms, *Revel.* 2. 10. Yet this is certain, *in the world Chriſtians ſhall have tribulation*, though when, and how long it is not for us to know aforehand, as Chriſt told his Diſciples, *Acts* 1. 7. *The times and ſeaſons are in God's power.*

Secondly, *The Reaſons why.*

1. Becauſe there is an enmity in the world againſt Piety and Holineſs, ever hath been, and will be; and that is the ground of Perſecution, and of Chriſtians Tribulation, *Gal.* 4. 29. As the *world* hated Chriſt, *John* 15. 18, 19. The *world*, as it is taken for the irregenerate,

regenerate, 1 *John* 5. 19. So every irregenerate man, *Rom.* 8. 7. And this is the ground of their tribulation in the world.

2. *In the world they have Tribulation for the tryal of their Graces.* As all *Job*'s were for his tryal. And indeed Hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians cannot be diſcovered aſſunder but by perſecutions and tribulations, as in *Rev.* 2. 10. and that is the reaſon that the Devil and wicked men may prove Liars: for though God hath ſufficiently confuted them, yet are they ready to ſay, as *Job* 1. 9, 10, 11. *Doth* Job *fear God for nought?* &c. and *Job* 2. 4, 5.

3dly. They are in *Tribulation*, becauſe they ſtand in need of it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. eſpecially when they grow proud, ſenſual, and their hearts are lifted up; as *Pſal.* 30. 6, 7. So when *David* had committed murder, &c. 2 *Sam.* 12. 10, 11. God keeps (as it were) a ſtricter hand over him than before, 2 *Sam.* 24. As we ſay of children, *that correction is ſometimes as neceſſary as food:* ſo is Tribulation for God's Children.

Fourthly, becauſe it is for their good. As Froſt and Snow is ſeaſonable in winter, profitable for the Corn, killing the Weeds; ſo is Tribulation, *Jer.* 24. 5. *Like theſe good Figs, ſo will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have ſent out of this place into the Land of the Caldeans for their good.* As all things ſhall, ſo afflictions do work together for good, *Rom.* 8. 28. *Pſal.* 119. 67. And the Faithfull ſhould never be in Tribulation, but that God aims at their good.

1. To work them to humiliation and repentance, as in 2 *Chron.* 7. 13, 14. *Deut.* 8. 2, 3, 16. ſo this is God's end, to break our proud ſpirits, to work us to humiliation for ſin, and to a hatred & forſaking of it, as a main cauſe of all our troubles. And is not this more

for

for our good, than if we ſhould be let alone in our ſins?

2. Again, for the increaſe of patience, experience, hope, as *Rom.* 5. 3, 4, 5. And to keep us in obedience, to keep us up in duty; afflictions make Chriſtians more watchful, *Pſal.* 119. 71. And indeed, for practical Godlineſs the Church flouriſhed moſt under the ten Perſecutions; and what tendeth to this, is clearly for a Chriſtians good.

3. Again, it is for their good, to wean them from the world, to draw out their deſires after Heaven. Nature doth encline us to love and like the world, and conſtant proſperity doth encreaſe our love of it, as ſeems to be implyed, in *Pſal.* 62. 10. *If Riches encreaſe, ſet not your hearts upon them.* But now tribulation weaneth our affections from the world, helpeth to raiſe them unto things above, according to our duty, *Col.* 3. 2. maketh us with the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 1. 23. deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.

4. Again, it for their good, as it doth further their aſſurance and hope of Glory: For a Chriſtian may doubt of his ſincerity, and that he ſhall not hold out in ſufferings, but when he findeth that through Grace he is enabled to ſuffer, it doth mightily ſtrengthen his hope, *Phil.* 1. 29. it is promiſed as a favour, to be able to ſuffer; and doubtleſs it is, becauſe it ſtrengthens aſſurance; one that writes of the ten Perſecutions, ſaith, Chriſtians did then ſeek more for Martyrdome than now men do for Biſhopricks.

5. Again, becauſe that the Faith and Graces which they exerciſe in tribulation ſhall be for their honour and commendation at the great day of Chriſt's appearing, as 1 *Pet* 1. 7. *Rev.* 7. 14. 15. *Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, &c.*

6. Again, becauſe this very ſuffering of the Saints worketh

worketh for their eternal advantage. It ſhall be fully recompenced ſometime in this life, *Matth.* 19. 26. but eſpecially in the life to come, as 2 *Cor* 4. 17. It *worketh for us*, not in a way of merit, yet in a way of promiſe, God having promiſed a compenſation in a high meaſure to them.

Reſtrict. 1. That though in the world Chriſtians, we ſhall have Tribulation, yet it is not ſaid when. It is not when the Devil will, or when wicked men will; for they would alwayes have the Saints in tribulation. And if it had been ſo, it would not have been ſaid, *ſhall have*, but *ye have Tribulation.* For when they have it not, it is becauſe the Devil and wicked men are ſtaved off by God, as *Job* 1. 10. But when God will, they *ſhall have Tribulation*, that is, when there is *need for it*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6.

Reſtr. 2. It is ſaid *Tribulation*, not how great. It is not ſo great as the Devil and wicked men would have: for they are for the utter ruine and deſtruction of ſuch; as *Job* 2. 3. he would have had *Job's* life. And ſo *Eſth.* 3. 8, 9. *Haman* would have the *Jews* deſtroyed. And *Pſal.* 137. 7. The children of *Edom* ſay of *Jeruſalem*, *Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.* But God hath the bounding of their tribulation, as *Rev.* 2. 10. it is but, —*ſhall caſt ſome into Priſon*, &c.

Reſtr. 3. For the time of Tribulation it is not here mentioned; it is only ſaid, *in the world*, but not how long. It is not ſo long as the Devil, &c. would: For as God is ſaid to bound the meaſure and degrees, ſo the time, *Pſal.* 76. 10. It ſhall not be alwayes, *Pſal.* 125. 3. The Devil's time is limited, *Rev.* 2. 10. Yet, as it is certain that *in the world we ſhall have tribulation*; ſo when, and ſo much, and of as long continuance as God ſees good.

Uſe 1. If this be ſo, then Chriſtians are not to think it

it ſtrange when tribulations come, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. It would be ſtrange for a Chriſtian to be free from tribulation, when Chriſt hath told him *in the world he ſhall have it*; and to have it is more a mark of God's Child than to be without it, *Heb.* 12. 7, 8. Therefore to be without it, is rather a wonder, than to have it.

Uſe 2. Expect it, if the words of Chriſt be true in the Text, and the Apoſtles, 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. then expect it. Chriſt did engage his Diſciples to ſit down and make account of it beforehand; as in *Luke* 14. 25. &c. If thou canſt not bear tribulation, never take upon thee to be Chriſt's Diſciple.

Uſe 3. Prepare for it. He is an unwiſe man that expecteth it, and doth not prepare for it. Chriſt hath given this warning that we might prepare.

1. Thoſe that have not prepared, have baſely fallen off, and taken offence at the Goſpel, *Luke* 8. 13.

2. Thoſe that have been prepared, have been confident; nothing could make them fall off, no tribulation, *Rom.* 8. 35. &c.

Directions.

1. Be ſure thou be clear as to thy Principles, be rooted and grounded in them: and though thou ſee no ſufferings before thee, yet make account of them, as *Mat.* 7. 24. to ver. 28.

2. Endeavour firmly to believe the Promiſes concerning the life and world to come. As *Moſes ſuffered with the People of God, having reſpect to the recompence of reward*, Heb. 11. 26. And Chriſt, *for the joy ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, &c.* *Heb.* 12. 2. This encouraged the Apoſtles, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

3. Be not confident of thy ſelf, but pray unto God to uphold thee in the hour of temptation. *Peter's* confidence and fall ſhould be our warning. And we ſhould

remember that, *Rom.* 11. 20. *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

Use 4. Then do not condemn a Cause, neither be offended with Principles, meerly because the parties that own them may suffer. As the Apostle, 1 *Thess.* 3. 3. *That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for your selves know that we are appointed thereunto.* It is true, suffering is not an infallible mark, but where Scripture-evidence confirmeth Principles for which men suffer.

Doct. 2. *Christ hath overcome the world.*

Explication.

Expli. 1. What is meant by *overcome*? The word in the Original is, *νενίκηκα*. The Theme is *νικάω παρὰ τὸ μὴ εἴκειν, of not yeelding*, or *giving way*, or *place*; and so here it is used. I have conquered or overcome by not yeelding to the Devils Temptations, or the worlds Allurements or Threats. So that *Overcoming* is taken for a constant adhering to a Cause or Principle, notwithstanding all Oppositions, by Arguments or Force, receiving the Assaults, keeping Ground, and not giving back. So it is used, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19, 20. A man is *overcome when he yeelds*; but so long as he keeps the field, he is not *overcome*: He that keepeth the field, if the other retreats, is Conquerour. So *Rev.* 2. 7, 17. and chap. 3. 12, 21. verses, parallel to *Mat.* 24. 13. *Secondly*, It is taken for subduing the Enemy, destroying his Force and Power, seizing of his spoil and prey, making him yeeld, and so vanquishing him that he hath no further power to resist. So the Syriack word, *Zkiteh*, *Luke.* 11. 22. So a man is overcome when he is spoiled of his Arms and Artillery, and what he hath.

2. *What is meant by the World?* By this is meant all earthly things, so far as they are temptations to sin, and

and means to draw us off from the Way of Salvation, *Gal.*6.14. 1 *John* 5.4. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World*; *i. e.* the Allurements of the World, as they would draw; and the Persecutions of the World, that would drive us out of the Way of Salvation; the World's Temptations that would hinder Christ's effecting our Salvation.

Secondly, *How did Christ overcome the World?*

1. By bearing Temptations that did arise from the want of such things, as are necessary for the sustaining natural life, and not being prevailed on thereby to sin against God, *Mat.* 4. 1, 2, 3. there the Devil subtilly maketh use of his want for the engaging him to sin; but though this was a sharp Temptation, yet Christ fully *overcame* it, *ver.* 4.

2. By rejecting the *pomp, glory* & *honour* of the World, as they were laid before him, *Mat.* 4.8, 9. he *overcame* this Temptation by the Word of God. So *Joh.* 6.15. there was a Temptation to enjoy worldly Greatness, yet he overcame it by withdrawing himself. Thus Christ *overcame* the World in the heigth of its pomp and glory.

3. Temptations from friends to sin, to avoid evil fore-seen; these are great Temptations, yet these Christ overcame, *Mat.* 16.21, 22. Christ knowing and fore-seeing his great Sufferings, acquainteth his Disciples with them; *Peter* adviseth him to look to himself (as this way the Christians were assaulted in the *Primitive* times) yet Christ *overcame* and repelled that carnal suggestion, *ver.* 23.

4. Christ also *overcame* the Sufferings of the World, and all the Persecutions that were raised against him: Persecutions of the tongue, *John* 9.24. So *Mat.* 10. 25. And after his Agony in the Garden, his buffetting, spitting on, crowning with thorns, and the ig-

nominious and ſhameful Death of the Croſs: Theſe were Temptations to ſin; but in all theſe conflicts, Chriſt *overcame*, and preſerved himſelf free from ſin.

5. He did not only *overcome* all Temptations from the World, but the Captain or General on the Worlds ſide, who hath the Management of theſe Temptations, *Epheſ.* 2.2. *Mat.*4.3, to 10. Thus he fully overcame the World, *Col.* 2. 15.

Thirdly, *In which of the foregoing ſenſes did Chriſt overcome the World?*

I anſwer, 1. In both: he overcame by reſiſting all Temptations he met with from the World; and enduring all ſufferings that were laid on him in the world patiently and meekly without ſin, 1 *Pet.*2.21,22,23. *Iſa.*53.8,9. If he had been drawn to ſin by the World, then the World had *overcome* him; but being free, he *overcame.*

2. Chriſt having thus overcome the World, he did manage his Victory after his Reſurrection, *Mat.*28. 18, 19, 20, and after his Aſcenſion, *Epheſ.* 4.10,11. Thus he did by the preaching of the Goſpel, increaſe his Dominions, calling in the Gentiles; Thus he did excellently purſue his Victory, to the weakening of Satans Kingdom, and the enlargement of his own.

Fourthly, *Why is it ſaid,* [I have overcome] *when the Victory was not yet perfect?*

I anſwer, 1. Becauſe Chriſt had then in his own perſon conquered the World ſo far as he had been aſſaulted by it, or had conflicted with it. And though his perfect Victory over the World in his own perſon, was to be accompliſhed on his Croſs; yet it is ſaid to be already, becauſe he was certain that he ſhould *overcome* in his laſt and great Conflict on the Croſs.

2. Though this Victory be not accompliſhed fully as to Chriſt's Members, yet Chriſt hath ſo *overcome* the World,

World, as that it is certain at the Day of Judgement, they ſhall have no power to make any further reſiſtance, when *the wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God*, Pſal. 9. 17. When *thoſe his Enemies, which would not that he ſhould reign over them, ſhall be brought and ſlain before him*, Luke 19. 27. When *the World ſhall paſs away, and the Luſt thereof*, 1 John 2. 17.

Fifthly, *That it is ſo.*

1. Becauſe Chriſt as he came into the World *pure*, without ſin; ſo, though the Devil and World, did to their utmoſt aſſault him, yet he was till death, *pure*, and free from ſin. Our firſt Parents were *overcome* when they yeelded to ſin: but Chriſt *overcame* becauſe he is *pure*, and *free* from ſin, and ever was ſo, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. *Heb.* 4. 15. and this is ~~as it were~~ a plain proof of his Victory; he was tempted, yet without ſin; as the contrary is of the Devil and Worlds conqueſt, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19, 20.

2. Becauſe he enjoyed the Crown, the Reward due to the Conqueror, *Rev.* 3. 21.—As I *overcame*, and am ſet down with my Father in his Throne; *q. d.* I therefore have this Glory & Honour conferred on me, becauſe I have *conquered*: If I had been overcome by the World, then I had miſſed of it. So that Chriſt ſitting at his Fathers right hand, is an evident Teſtimony of his Victory; for he had not had that Glory if he had not conquered.

Sixthly, *Reaſons why.*

Reaſ. 1. That he might glorifie his Divine Power. After that the Devil and World had overcome *Adam* and his Poſterity, and Man by ~~the~~ own ſtrength and power could not overcome or get out of his ſnare, or from under the power of Satan and the World, *Heb.* 10. 4, to 10. *Lo I come*; *q. d.* I come, who am God as

well as man, able to give ſatisfaction and to conquer the World; and having undertaken this conflict, and entred the Liſts, he overcame for the Glory of his Divinity.

Reaſ. 2. That he might accompliſh our Salvation. For had he whilſt he was upon earth, been *overcome* by the World, and ſo tainted with ſin, the work of our Redemption and Salvation had miſcarried, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. In *Exod.* 12. 5. The Lamb that was to typifie Chriſt, muſt be without *blemiſh*: Now had Chriſt been overcome, ſo as to be ſtained with ſin, our Salvation had miſcarried; but he overcame the world for our ſakes.

Reaſ. 3. He did this for the Joy that was ſet before him (*Heb.* 12. 2.) If he did win the victory, and gain the conqueſt, the advancing of his humane nature to God's right hand, was promiſed him, if he *overcame*, and this encouraged him in his conflict; as appeareth, *Who for the Joy*, &c. This he did expect at God's hand, *John* 17. 4, 5. *I have glorified thee on earth*; —— *and now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own ſelf, with the Glory which I had with thee before the world was.* He was juſt now at his laſt and great conflict, is confident he ſhall *overcome*, and mindeth God of his Reward.

Reaſ. 4. That he might teach and inſtruct us how to conquer the World: Chriſt conquering by ſuffering, was for our example; 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. —— *Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.* And ſo we are in our conflicts frequently put in mind of Chriſt's, *Heb.* 12. 2, 3, 4. and ſo doubtleſs Chriſt did conquer and *overcome* the World, for to give us an Example: He could have done it as God; but he did it in our natures for this end.

Uſe 1.

Use 1. If this be ſo then, it is for a Chriſtians comfort and encouragement, that the Captain of our Salvation, hath *overcome* our Enemy, *the World*, *Heb.* 2. 10. He got a perfect Victory by Suffering. It is the joy of Souldiers that their Captain hath got the field. So it ſhould be of us Chriſtians; for the Souldiers are not more ſure to reap benefit by the Captains victory, than we by Chriſt's.

1. Chriſt hath overcome the World in the utmoſt of its ſtrength and vigor: It tryed its full ſtrength with the want of neceſſary ſuſtenance when hungry, with the heighth of Glory and abundance, *Mat.* 4. 2,3,8. with the perſwaſion of friends, and extremity of ſufferings; yet Chriſt overcame the World in ~~that~~ our nature; and ſo aſſureth us that its poſſible for man to *overcome* this Enemy in its full force.

2. Becauſe that this Victory of Chriſts is the ground of our Aſſurance of Salvation. For after the Devil had conquered the firſt *Adam*, if he and the World had conquered the Second, our Salvation had miſcarried, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15. If he had been baſled, we had been loſt; ~~but~~ if he had failed in this enterprize, there had been no hope of our Conqueſt; therefore we have ground to rejoyce that Chirſt hath overcome the World.

3. There is ground of Comfort that Chriſt hath *overcome* the World, in that he hath left us a baſled and beaten enemy to conflict with; What an Encouragement is this? Chriſt hath broken the Serpents head: and though this Enemy did rally and charge again and again, yet at laſt Chriſt did fully *overcome*. So that this may encourage us to enter the Liſts with this Adverſary, and may give us great hopes of Victory.

 4. He

4. He hath left us the way and method how he overcame the World, *viz.* by conſtant reſiſting and oppoſing by the Word of God, and patient enduring of all aſſaults, *Mat.*4.2, to 10. and if we will but ſtudy this Rule, and follow it, we ſhall *overcome*. He tryed his full ſtrength on Chriſt, and was thus conquered: We have the ſame Enemy, but weaker, becauſe *overcome*; and may rejoyce that we know how to conquer him.

Uſe 2. If this be ſo, then it is great ſin and ſhame for Chriſtians to be *overcome* of the World in any of its aſſaults, for to be overcome by a baſled beaten enemy that Chriſt did overcome. With what face can ſuch as *Demas*, or thoſe in *Luke* 8. 13. look Chriſt in the face, the Captain of Salvation, who being Conqueror, hateth cowardly yeelding; eſpecially, he having acquainted us with the Aſſaults of this Adverſary, and how to *overcome* them?

Uſe 3. Let us ſtudy his way of conquering, and follow it exactly, and we ſhall do ſo too. This the Apoſtle did, 2 *Cor.*6.4, to 11. they did exactly follow their Captain. So did the Primitive Martyrs, who had all the ſame Aſſaults from the World as Chriſt had, but by reſiſting by the Word, and enduring, they *overcame*. And ſo ſhall Chriſtians that will cloſely follow this Diſcipline in this War.

Uſe. 4. If this be ſo, then in the ſharpeſt Conflicts thou ſhall meet with, call to thy conquering Captain for help. He hath won the day, and can aſſiſt thee. *Heb.* 2. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour, &c.* What ever the Aſſault is, he is able to give thee ſufficient help. As in that 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. Let us take this courſe, for it will be a great ſhame to us to be *overcome*.

Doct. 3. *That though Chriſtians have Tribulation in the*

the world, yet they are to be of good Comfort, becauſe Chriſt hath overcome the World.

Explication.

1. What is meant, by *be of good chear?* The Word in the Original is, θαρσεῖτε. The theme θαρσέω; It ſignifies, *I confide*, or *truſt*, *Mat.*9.2.—*Be of good chear, &c. i. e.* truſt, confide, be of good heart as to the iſſue; and *Mark* 6. 50. And ſo the Syriack word, [*Etlabbw*] it is uſed for to be of *good heart*, *chear up*, let not your *ſpirits faint*, *fail*, or be *dejected*. And ſo it is uſed in *Acts* 27.25. And ſo in 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14.—*Comfort the feeble-minded, &c.* put courage into drooping ſpirits that are apt to be diſmayed. So here, *In the World you ſhall have Tribulation; but be of good heart.*

2. *But be of good chear*, you are likely to have Tribulation in the World; and that I know is likely to be daunting and diſmaying news to you: For in that *Heb.*12.11. *No chaſtening for the preſent ſeems to be joyous, but grievous.* But this is an adverſative particle; though it be ſo that nature doth encline men to be diſmayed and caſt down; but be not you ſo; but act contrarily; *be of good chear*; pluck up your hearts and ſpirits *like men*; be not diſmayed.

3. *For*] This is a cauſal particle, and doth intimate the reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould be of *good chear*. I have had the ſame conflict with the World you ſhall have, and I have got the Victory; this is ſpoken by Chriſt in relation to his full *overcoming* of the World, and ſitting at the Right hand of God: Therefore be of good comfort, I have beaten this enemy, and have got a glorious triumph: you have this beaten enemy to fight, and may expect the like iſſue, *Rev.*3.21.

Secondly, The Reaſons. *Why, have Chriſtians ground of comfort in Tribulation?*

1. *Becauſe*

1. Becauſe they ſuffer Tribulation *for Righteouſneſs ſake*, and ſo are *bleſſed*, as in *Mat.* 5.11. And ſo 1 *Pet.*4.14. & 3.14. *If ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye.* Now when there is evidence from the Word of God, and Conſcience, that the cauſe of our ſuffering is our being Righteous, the Scripture accounts us bleſſed.

2. Becauſe it is an evident token to ſuch perſons of their Sincerity, and having Truth of Grace, 1 *Pet.* 4.14. And this is a ſign of a through-work when men endure, *Luke* 8.13. As it is a high Gift (*Phil.*1.29.) ſo a ſign of a great meaſure of Grace, to be able to believe and ſuffer.

3. Becauſe that by ſuffering Tribulation, *God is glorified*, 1 Pet.4.14.

as When a Souldier can ſay, I ſuffer theſe loſſes for it; I judged it a cauſe worth ſuffering for: as *Mat.* 19.27. Now this is for the credit of Chriſts Cauſe. As in the Primitive times againſt Pagans: In the time of the *Vandal Arrians* againſt falſe doctrine: And in the time of Popery, againſt falſe doctrine and worſhip, God was *glorified*.

4. Becauſe ſuch as do thus ſuffer, *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat.*5.10. And ſo the reaſon is given becauſe that the Prophets that are now in Heaven, underwent the like Perſecutions, *Mat.*5.12. and therefore ground of Comfort. This the Apoſtle gives, *Rom.* 8.17,18. 2 *Cor.* 4.17. And the examples that are gone before. And,

5. Becauſe that though Chriſtians have Tribulation in the world, yet *in Chriſt they have peace.* What need a Chriſtian matter, though the Devil and wicked men be at war with him, when he hath peace with God, Chriſt and his Conſcience? as the Text; ſo *Rom.*5.1. *Joh.*14.27. And by ſuffering Tribulation, this is preſerved, *there-*

fore

fore rejoyce and be of good chear; this is the beſt peace.

6. Becauſe of the Profit and Commodity that Chriſtians ſhall reap by Tribulation in this Life: As *Heb.* 12. 11. and upon this account the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 5. 3, 4, 5. And ſo though the outward man decay, that is, though eſtate, health, liberty, and whatever appertains to the outward man decay; yet, as 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. we are of *good chear*, ſenſibly perceiving ſpiritual profit by our great Affliction, and Tribulation.

7. Becauſe by ſuffering Tribulation, we are made conformable to the *Image of Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 8. 29. And though the holy Ghoſt ſpeaks this of the Reſurrection, 1 *Cor.* 15: 4. *Phil.* 3. 21. yet the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 3. 10. and ſo 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. it is with Chriſt; and a fellowſhip and conformity to his ~~Image~~ of ſuffering death: Therefore great ground for us to be of *good chear*.

8. A Chriſtian is to be of *good chear*, becauſe Chriſt our Captain, bids us be *ſo*: and if he did not ſee ground and cauſe thus to encourage us, he would never have done it. He bad the Diſciples, in *Mark* 6. 50. *Be of good chear*. It is God and Chriſt that have the overruling hand in theſe Tribulations, as 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. therefore ground of being of *good chear*; Chriſt hath bidden us ſo to be.

2. Why, becauſe Chriſt hath overcome the World? Did not *Job* overcome the World by Patience? *Job* 1. 22. And ſo *Moſes*, who did chuſe Afflictions? And ſo *Jam.* 5. 10, 11. So *Mat.* 5. 11. To this I anſwer.

1. That indeed they are Examples of Courage and Patience; but they ſuffered as private perſons, or more on a private account: Therefore ſo eminently we are not bid, *be of good comfort*, though ſomething is hinted in *Mat.* 5. 11.

2. Jeſus Chriſt overcoming the World, is of publick concernment; he did it in our ſtead and behalf.

The

The Devil and World did design to hinder our Salvation by tempting Christ to sin; if they had prevailed, our Salvation had been hindered: but his overcoming the world, removed all obstructions as to the meritorious cause of our Salvation. Hence is that, *Rom.* 4.25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our Justification.*

3. Christ's overcoming the World is of greater concernment to us for our Comfort in Afflictions, than Saints overcoming the world; for theirs was for their own Salvation; the Scriptures making Promises to him that overcometh, *Mat.*24.13. & *Gal.*6.9. But now Christ did it on our account; the Glory personally was his, *John* 17.5. *before the World was*, and that was large; as in *Phil.* 2.6, to 9.

4. Christ's bidding us be of good Comfort on this account, because his Victory hath broken *the Serpents head*; he hath left us but the distressed body to conflict with. And though when we reade of the Martyrs Sufferings, we may think them almost comparable to Christ's; yet never any did nor shall for Righteousness sake, suffer the like, as it appeareth, *John* 14.27. These expressed in their death nothing like his Agony; especially, *Mat.*27.46.

5. There is strength also given by vertue of Christ's Victory to overcome the World, and so ground of comfort; as the Apostle concludeth, *Phil.*4.11,12,13. this is spoken in respect of suffering Tribulation. And so *Phil.*1.29. *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, &c.* and that by Christs Victory. And so in *Heb.* 2.18. And thus there is cause to be of *good chear*: As it was said of *Constantine*, *Sub Cruce Vinces*; So Christians.

6. And lastly. His Conquest was of more publick Example: Its true, others are Examples, but Christ mainly, 1 *Pet.*2.21. And so *Heb.* 2.10,11. *He by his Sufferings*

Sufferings was perfected: and ſo left us ſome in the way to Heaven, *Col.* 1. 24. And that is only ſo much as is neceſſary for our tryal, and further fitting for Heaven.

Uſe 1. If this be ſo, then it is the duty of Chriſtians, in all Tribulations they meet with in the world, *to be chearful.* Chriſt commandeth his Diſciples to be ſo, in the Text. And the Apoſtle preſſed this Doctrine, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 16. *Phil.* 4. 4. This alway and evermore muſt take in the time of *Tribulation*; ſeeing Chriſt did tell us, and we find by experience, we muſt have it *in the world*; and then when we have it, we ſhould *be of good chear.*

1. We have examples of ſuch as have practiſed this. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in Tribulation.* And ſo in 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. *wherein ye greatly rejoyce*, &c. ſpeaking of the ſpirits of Saints at that time. So in that commendation, *Heb.* 10. 34. And ſo *Paul* and *Silas* ſung in Priſon. Alſo the comforts that primitive and latter Martyrs have expreſſed, confirm this. No other ſort of men have been like them for this.

2. It is a duty that we ſin much againſt God if we do not practiſe: becauſe we have encouragement from our Captain, that undertook and got this Victory for our ſakes, and hath left but ſome ſtragling afflictions behind, *Col.* 1. 24. We ſhould be very cowardly, if we do not with good courage follow him, when it is but, *Reſiſt, and he will flee*, Jam. 4. 7. and but *believe*, as 1 John 5. 4. *and we ſhall overcome.*

Obj. But ſome may object, *If it was in ſome tribulation, I could be more chearful, if from enemies*; as Pſal. 55. 12, 13, 14.

Anſ. 1. To this I anſwer, That Chriſt hath told us, that in tribulation which we meet with in the world, of what nature & ſort ſoever, we are to *be of good chear*; not

not in this or that particular tribulation only.

2. Christ hath overcome the world in this point; when his Disciples fled, and *Peter* denied him. And so *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 16, 17. *No man stood with me, but all forsook me.* Yet he had God to stand with him.

Use 2. If this be so, Then a Christian, though he suffer, yet Christ hath, as it were, sweetned it, in bidding us *rejoyce*: He hath sweetly mixed this bitter cup; though it cannot pass from us, but we must drink of it. What a voice is this in affliction? it is suitable and comfortable, as *Mark* 6. 50.

3dly. It is a great sin, *not to be of good chear in Tribulation.* He knoweth what the sharpest of afflictions mean, and underwent them; and so knoweth there is ground for what he hath engaged us to: and if we be not of good chear, but cowardly yeeld, as 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. Him that is ashamed, and cannot patiently and chearfully bear tribulation, Christ will not own.

4thly. Let us think of such things in Tribulation, as may make us chearful. For in Tribulation it self no man can rejoyce; it must be some adjunct that must make us chearful in it; As,

1. *Sincerity*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. and so *Hezekiah* did, *Isa.* 38. 3.

2. *Interest in God, as our God*; as in *Phil.* 4. 4. So *Lam.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him.* This is the highest ground of comfort.

3. *The glorious Issue*; as *Moses* did, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. and Christ, *Heb.* 12. 2. and the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

4. Look on it as an *Honour*, 2 Thess. 1. 4, 5. and so in *Acts* 5. 4. the Apostles looked upon it as a badge of Honour. So *Gal.* 6. 17.

5. It is an excellent means to yeeld comfort in tribulation, to consider the *End God made with suffering Saints*;

Saints, as to this life; *Jam.* 5. 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord*, &c. So *Joseph*, and *David*.

6. And lastly, *Christ's Victory over the world*, His *Issue* and *Support* we are like to have, *Heb.* 2. 18. This Christ layeth down as ground of comfort; and this we may take comfort mainly from.

SERMON XIII.

by Mr. Thomas Bladon. Alderwas Shafford Sh.

Acts 20. 32.

And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and the word of his Grace, that is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

EVery Society shall have a Separation, and every Communion shall receive a dissolution; the dearest Friends and sweetest Relations, as of Husband and Wife, of Parents and Children, of Ministers and People, whom Nature, Providence, and Election, like a threefold-cord hath joyned together, and this strengthned with the strongest cement of true intensive love and affection, shall sooner or later, either by Satan's rage, the malice of wicked men, or the stroak of death, be parted asunder. Here is no certainty of long continuance in this world, or of long enjoyment of any society or relation. The Tabernacle made by *Moses*, had no continued abiding, but was carried up and down from place to place, til it was placed in *Solomons* temple in the Land of *Canaan*. God's People in Scripture are called *Pilgrims and Strangers*. Whilst they are in this world they are in a strange Country: like *Abraham* in *Canaan*, and *Israel* in *Egypt*; they have no continued abiding until they come to Heaven, the *Celestial Canaan*,

man, that place of durable and uninterrupted Rest. And amongst these God's Ministers have no assurance of their unchangeable residence among, and ministration to, their loving and beloved People. A plain demonstration whereof we have in the example of *Paul*; concerning whose many journeys from one Nation and Church to another, we have abundant mention made in this History of the *Acts of the Apostles*. And in this chapter we have mention made of four; the first into *Macedonia*, where the *Jews* laid wait for *Paul*, ver. 1, 2, 3. The second to *Troas*, where *Paul* preached in the night, administred the Lord's Supper, and *Eutichus* sleeping, falleth down from an high window, ver. 6, to 13. The third to many places, to *Assos*, *Mitylene*, *Chios*, *Samos*, and *Trogyllium*, vers. 13, 14. The fourth and last, more famous than the rest, was to *Miletum*, ver. 15. from whence he sends to *Ephesus*, and calls together the Ministers of the Churches there, ver. 17. and when they were come together, he takes his Farewel of them; in which speech, he first declares his former manner of life amongst them, how he had discharged the duties of his Ministry with meekness and compassion, with diligence and innocency, with courage and resolution, despising all dangers for the Gospel-sake, &c. In which example of his he insinuates, not only to the Presbyters of *Ephesus*, but unto all Ministers unto the end of the world, how diligently they ought to watch over the Flock, *serving the Lord in all humility*, that is, not to pride in their gifts & abilities; not to despise the wants and weaknesses of others; to sympathize with the poor and afflicted; to be valiant and heroically constant in preaching & defending the Truth, notwithstanding the many temptations and oppositions they were to meet with, ver. 19, 20, 21. Secondly, he shews the condition of his life at present; that

that he had a mighty impulſe and perſwaſion of the Spirit upon him, *that bonds abide him in every City*, ver. 22, 23. and his Chriſtian magnanimity, he was not moved with any of theſe things, nor counted his life dear unto him, that he might finiſh his courſe with joy, and the Miniſtry he had received of the Lord, *to teſtifie the Goſpel of the Grace of God*, ver. 24. In the third place, he propheſieth concerning the future. And firſt, what ſhould befall himſelf; this was the laſt time they ſhould enjoy him; *And behold, all ye among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more*, ver. 25. And ſecondly, what ſhould befal them after his departure: As the abſence of the Shepherd invites the wild beaſts to fall upon, devour and ſcatter the Flock; and as the death of the Husband invites the wicked to oppreſs, wrong, and defraud his Widow and Fatherleſs: So the departure of *Paul*, a vigilent and painful Shepherd, a loving and tender Father, opens a way, and uſhers in an opportunity for wicked men to enter in, and play the part of Wolves and Oppreſſors againſt the Church of God. *For I know, that after my departure ſhall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the Flock, &c.* ver. 29, 30. and hence exhorts them unto *all diligence* and care, for the due performance of their Miniſterial Calling; *Take heed therefore to your ſelves, and to all the Flock of God*, ver. 28. as if he ſhould ſay, You muſt not only take heed to others, but to your ſelves alſo. To others you muſt take heed that they be not ſeduced with Errours and Hereſies: and to your ſelves you are to take heed that you incur not God's Diſpleaſure and Rod, for a neglect, or ill performance of your duty. And this he preſſeth with divers Arguments; firſt, from their Name and Office, they were *Biſhops* and *Overſeers* over the Flock. Secondly, from the great Appointer and Deſigner of them

unto this Office, the *Holy Ghoſt*. Thirdly, from the end of their appointment and call to this Office, *to feed the Flock*. Fourthly, from the Owner of the Flock, *God himſelf*. Fifthly, from the great Price paid to redeem and purchaſe this Flock, which was neither Silver nor Gold; theſe were poor and mean things; but *Blood*: not the blood of a mean-man, nor of a nobleman, nor yet of a King; but the Blood of God! *Take heed therefore to your ſelves, and all the Flock over which the holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath redeemed and purchaſed with his own Blood*. Sixthly, from the conſideration of the Churches enemies that ſhould ariſe after his departure; which were either foreign, or domeſtick. Foreign, were the *Jews*, or *Gentiles* not yet converted to the Chriſtian Religion. Such as theſe he means in ver. 29. Their domeſtick enemies were ſuch as were brought up by the Miniſters of the Goſpel, but by ambition, covetouſneſs and ignorance ſhould apoſtatize, and fall into erroneous and heretical doctrines, ſuperſtitious opinions, calling themſelves *Apoſtles*, *but are not*, mixing *Chriſt* and *Moſes* together, aſſerting the doctrine of the *Nicholaitans*: Such as theſe he means in ver. 30. *Men of your own ſelves ſhall ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, and ſhall draw away Diſciples after them*: And theſe Enemies, in reſpect of their nature, are called *Wolves*, and that in reſpect of certain reſemblances: what Wolves are unto the Flock, the ſame are Perſecutors and Seducers to the Church of God. Theſe by Perſecution would be grievous and intolerable: theſe by the Errours and Hereſies would be contagious and infecting. And after theſe motives, renews his former Exhortation, *that they would remember and watch*, ver. 31. As if he ſhould ſay, Seeing Chriſt hath redeemed his Church by his Blood, and I by my great labours have builded

builded up a Church among you; and ſeeing you are appointed by the holy Ghoſt to be Overſeers to the Flock, to feed it; and ſeeing after my departure grievous Wolves ſhall ariſe to deſtroy the Flock, ſome by open hoſtility and perſecution, ſome by errours and infection; be ſo much the more vigilant and induſtrious to ſave and preſerve them and your ſelves: Let not Chriſt's Blood be ſhed in vain, nor my labour loſt, nor the enemies of the Church advantaged, by your careleſs neglect of your duty, or by being infected with the leaven of falſe doctrines; but be laborious and immovable and couragious, that your People may be preſerved, and your ſelves freed from the blood of all men. And then for their better comfort and ſecurity againſt Perſecution by open and profeſſed Enemies on the one hand, and againſt erroneous, heretical and ſuperſtitious doctrines on the other hand, he committeth them to God and the Word of his Grace.

The words of the Text are part of *Paul's* Farewel to the beloved *Epheſians*, and muſt now be the ſubject of my *Valediction* to you. And if you will have a name for my Text, it is, *The Paſtors Farewell to his People*; or rather, *A departing Paſtors Security for his left People*. *Paul* ſpake to them as a departing man, but a living Miniſter and Apoſtle. I ſpeak them as a living man, but a dying Miniſter. He told them after his departure *they ſhould ſee his face no more*; but in my dying expiring Office I have living hopes, that when the dayes, for the ſlaying of the Witneſſes (if now be the time) are accompliſhed, I ſhall be reſtored to you again, *Rev.* 11. 7, 8, 9, 11, 13.

In the words you have a twofold *Remedy*, in oppoſition to a twofold *Malady*. The firſt Malady is the Churches affliction and peſecution, mentioned verſe 29. for which the Apoſtle preſcribeth God, as the Soveraigne

cure and remedy: *I now commend you to God.* The ſecond malady is *Errour* and *Hereſie*, by which many ſhould be deceived, mentioned verſe 30. for which the Apoſtle preſcribeth God's Word as the proper remedie; *and now I commend you to God* and *his Word*; which is further amplified, firſt, by the adjunct title, Grace, *and the Word of his Grace*; ſecondly, by the effects of this Word, firſt, Edification; ſecondly, Life eternal, *which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified.* And then the title given to theſe Miniſters of *Epheſus*, Brethren; *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified.* Before I come to the Doctrine I chiefly intend, give me leave briefly to touch, *tanquam Canis ad Nilum*, upon one obſervation from the Apoſtles relative name to the Miniſters of *Epheſus*; he calls them *Brethren.* Whence note,

Doct. *That true and real Chriſtians are Brethren.*

What the Apoſtle *Paul* calls here the Miniſters of *Epheſus*, is true concerning all Miniſters, and all converted Chriſtians. We read of ſeveral ſorts and kinds of Brethren in Scripture: Brethren by Nature, Brethren by Nation, Brethren by Relation, Brethren by Affection, Brethren by Profeſſion, manner of Imployment, and ſame Calling in the world: but the Fraternity of Chriſtians, is from the Nobleſt and firmeſt and happieſt foundation, *Eodem ſanguine Chriſti glutinati*, cemented with the ſame blood of Chriſt. This Brotherhood of Chriſtians is ſupernatural, founded on the New-birth, and work of Grace in the ſoul; this term and relative-name is ſo uſual in Scripture in this ſence, that it is needleſs to mention any. But for further demonſtrations of it, they are Brethren.

1. They

1. They have all one Father, even God himſelf. *To them that do receive him he gave power to become the Sons of God, which are not born of fleſh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but by the will of God*, John 10. 11, 12.

2. They have all one Mother, the Church of God. *But Jeruſalem which is from above, is free, which is the Mother of us all*, Gal. 4. 26.

3. They have all one elder Brother, Jeſus Chriſt, *The firſt born amongſt many Brethren*, Rom. 8. 29.

4. They have all the ſame priviledges, 1 *Cor.* 3. 23. *Epheſ.* 4. 4, 5, 6.

5. They are cloathed with the ſame ſpiritual garment, the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, *Jer.* 23. 6.

6. They have the ſame Divine Nature, Grace and Holineſs; whereby they reſemble their elder Brother, and bear the impreſs and image of their heavenly Father, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

7. They are admitted to the ſame Table, fed with the ſame food of God's holy Word; and feaſted with the Fleſh and Blood of the Son of God unto Life Eternal.

8. They all have one and the ſame Inheritance. *An inheritance incorruptable, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for them*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. I cannot ſtand to enlarge upon theſe, I leave them to your meditations and enlargments. From hence you learn theſe Leſſons.

1. That God is no reſpecter of perſons, he regards no man the more for his dignities, riches, nobleneſs of birth and pedegree: And eſteems no man the leſs for his povertie, meaneſs, and contemtibleneſs in the world, *But every one that doth righteouſneſs of what Nation ſoever, ſhall be accepted of him*; all mens blood is alike, the noble man and the mean man, the *Engliſh-*

man and the *Æthiopian* have all red blood in their veins, it is ſickneſs and health that makes the difference; So all men by nature are alike, it is ſin and Grace that makes the difference: Yea, God croſſeth the great things of the world, to teach us, what is of high eſteem amongſt men, is of ſmall account with God. *Brethren*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *you ſee your calling, how that not many wiſe men, not many great men, not many noble men after the fleſh are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh and weak things of the world to condemn the wiſe and ſtrong*, 1 Cor. 1. 26. *He hath choſen the poor of the world, rich in Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom*, James 2. 5.

2. We learn again, True Piety is great preferment. Grace and Holineſs lifts a man up to the nobleſt relations. Great was the perferment that *Joſeph* was lifted up unto, when of a priſoner he became the ſecond of *Egypt*. Great was the perferment of *Daniel*, when of a captive he was made cheif of the Preſidents of *Babylon*. But greater was the advancement of *Eſther*, when of a captive maid, fatherleſs and motherleſs, ſhe became Queen to the great *Aſhaſuerus*. *Joſephs* and *Daniels wiſdom*, and *Eſthers beauty*, were the inſtruments and means of their great and honourable advancements: But greater than theſe is the honour and advancement of ſuch as are truly Pious, they are *Children of God*, John 1. 11, 12. *Heirs of God, Co-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17. eſpouſed to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; there is none beyond this, none to be compared to it; Grace and Holineſs is the way and means to be thus advanced. Grace enobles the mean, and makes the Noble more honourable; as it was ſaid of St. *Jerome*, ſo it may be ſaid of every Noble Pious man; *Genere nobilis, Sanctitate nobilior*; Noble by birth, but more Noble by Grace: meaneſs with Grace

Grace is Nobleneſs; and Nobleneſs without Grace is but meaneſs: Grace brings a poor contemned botchy *Lazarus* into relation of the Nobleſt Worthies of the world, to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, to all the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apoſtles, to ſuch as are the moſt Excellent of the Earth, the Worlds wonder, Angels delight, the Chariots and Horſemen of the Nations, the brazen walls and gates of the Kingdoms they live in: Grace inveſteth us with the ſame priviledges as the richeſt Saints of the world ever have enjoyed, the ſame Juſtification, the ſame Reconciliation, the ſame Adoption, the ſame Life eternal and Glorification.

Secondly, If true Chriſtians be Brethren, than this may exhort us to ſeveral duties.

1. To live in love amongſt our ſelves; the very term beſpeaketh affection, and the affection ſhould never ceaſe, ſo long as the relation endures. Who ſhould love more than thoſe who are united in the ſame Head and Hope, and cemented with the ſame blood of Chriſt? It was an honour to Religion once, and therefore the *Heathens* ſaid, *Aſpice ut ſe mutuo diligunt Chriſtiani!* See how theſe Chriſtians love one another! But alas, may we not ſay, See how they hate one another! O take heed of diſcreditting your Profeſſion, of opening the mouths, and hardening the hearts of the wicked, by envie, hatred, or want of love one to another. It was the Exhortation of *John* to his People, when he could preach no more in the Pulpit, *that they love one another*; and it ſhall be mine in theſe my dying words, *that you love as Brethren*: And as the foundation of this relation is more excellent than others, ſo let our love be more fervent and intenſive.

2. Labour to maintain peace and unity. This is *good and pleaſant to behold*, Pſal. 135. 1. Let it not be

ſaid that a legion of Devils can live in one man in peace and unity, and yet Chriſtians cannot: Let not inferiours go beyond the bounds of their duty and place, neither let Superiors ſtand too much upon their Prerogatives, but rather for peace ſake to abate of what they might juſtly chalenge upon their ſuperiority; the richer, the elder, the nobler you are, the more endeavor to be good examples to others, condeſcending to the infirmities of the weak, that the golden bond of peace be not broken; we ſee this in *Abraham*, who though he was elder, yet for peace ſake gave liberty to *Lot* his younger to choſe which way he would go to feed his cattel, *And Abraham ſaid to Lot, Let there be no ſtrife between me and thee, between my herdſmen and thy herdſmen, for we are Brethren*, Gen. 13. 4. Labour to be of the ſame judgment in matters of Religion; it is pleaſant to ſee Brethren of the ſame mind in matters of Religion. Conſonant ſounds upon Muſical Inſtruments ſweeten the melody: there was no hammer nor ax, nor any tool of Iron heard in *Solomons* Temple while it was in building; neither ſhould there be heard or ſeen diſcords in the Houſe of God. Diviſions of judgments blunt the edge of Chriſtians love, abate the fervency of affection, create diſtance and ſhineſs of ſociety amongſt familiars, gratifies Satan, grieves the Spirit of God, weakens Chriſt's Kingdom, and expoſeth a People to ruine: *A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*; and if one member of the body ſhould fight with another, and each member of the body ſcratch, tear and rend one another, how deformed, weak and near to ruine would that be? Unapt ſounds upon Muſical Inſtruments ſpoyl the melody; the diviſions of the Church of *Corinth* ſounded harſhly in the Apoſtles ears; ſome ſaid they were of *Paul*, others of *Apollos*, others of *Cephas*: If you would be comforts

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and helps one to another, if you would be a credit to your Profeſſion, and comfort and rejoyceing to your Miniſter, live in unity of judgment in matters of Religion; contend not for the ſhadow, and loſe the ſubſtance. Be not ſubſtantial about circumſtances, and circumſtantial about Subſtances. In the language of the Apoſtle, *I beſeech you Brethren, that there be no diviſions among you, but that you be perfectly joyned together in the ſame judgment*, 1 Cor. 1. 10.

4. Be ready to help and ſuccour one another: Nature hath created a Sympathy and Compaſſion in every relation. The mother pitties and abundantly tenders her ſick child, doth all ſhe can to do it good, to eaſe it under pain, to recover it from pain and ſickneſs. One brother is ready to condole with the ſufferings of another; to ſupply his wants; to defend him in danger: As *Moſes* the Iſraelite, whom the Egyptian wronged, *Exod.* 2, 11, 12. and how much more ſhould Brethren in Grace? the dearer the Relation, the more tender Affection. As Brethren, ſympathize ye one with another; Succour ſuch as are tempted; reduce ſuch as wander; ſatisfie the ſcrupulous; confirm ſuch as are ſtaggering; and raiſe ſuch as are fallen, by Prayers for them, by Counſels, by Exhortations. Improve your Gifts and Abilities, your Graces and Experiences, to relieve and ſuccour them in ſpirituals, as you would be ready to aſſiſt them in temporals with your eſtates.

5. Miniſters ſhould not *lord it over Gods Heritage*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. they ſhould not imperiouſly lord it over them; nor lay greater burdens upon their Conſciences, than Jeſus Chriſt hath impoſ'd: We muſt do all things for their edification, not any thing for their deſtruction: We muſt further, not hinder them in their progreſs to Heaven; take away occaſions, not

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lay ſtones of ſtumbling before them: How diſgraceful and intolerable would it be, to ſee one Brother to grow proud, lordly, and domineering over the other? would not every one cry ſhame upon it? And ſhall thoſe whom Grace hath made equal, uſurp Authority, and rule one over another, when Chriſt hath not given ſuch authority and juriſdiction? And as Miniſters muſt not lord it over the Conſciences of their Flock, ſo one Miniſter muſt not act Authority over another. The Apoſtle *Paul* was a man extraordinarily called and qualified, and ſo had an Authority over other Miniſters; but when this extraordinary Miſſion ceaſed, the Superiority of Juriſdiction ceaſed alſo: And though he was an Apoſtle, yet he acted not imperiouſly over the Presbyters, but called them *Brethren*: neither had he *Jacobs* voice, and *Eſaus* hand; he ſpake not as a Lamb, and acted like a Lyon; but his carriage and deportment, was a comment upon the name. Where Chriſt hath given no ſuperiority of power and juriſdiction, let no man claim it, leſt he be found an Uſurper; whom the Apoſtle calls in one place, *Biſhops*; in another place, he calleth *Presbyters*: as in this place, he calleth the Miniſters of the Church of *Epheſus*, *Presbyters*, ver. 17. μετεκαλέσατο τὸς πρεσβυτέρυς τῆς ἐκκλησίας, *He called together the Presbyters of the Church*. And in ver. 28. he calls them *Biſhops*; *Take heed therefore to your ſelves, and to all the flock over whom the holy Ghoſt*, ἔθετο ἐπισκόπυς, *hath made*, or placed, *you* Biſhops or *Overſeers*. And the ſame Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, calls Miniſters, *Presbyters*, *Chap* 1. 5. and the ſame he calls, *Biſhops*, *ver.* 7. Now if Presbyters & Biſhops had not been one and the ſame, but names of diſtinct Office, Juriſdiction and Power, the Apoſtle's reaſons in verſ. 7. of his directions in the 5*th* and 6*th* verſes, would have been inconſequential. And we find the Edification of the Church

Church by Word and Sacraments, is a duty impoſed upon *Presbyters*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. *Feed the Flock of God among you.* And *Paul* in his Valediction, injoyns the ſame Work, Care, and Diligence to the *Presbyters* of *Epheſus*, ver. 28. And we reade that the Power of Ordination did belong to them, and was conferred by the *Impoſition of their hands*, and not by the hands of a *Biſhop* only; *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Propheſie, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. And we reade alſo in the Scriptures, that they are called, *Rulers*; *And we beſeech you Brethren to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you*, 1 Theſ. 5. 12. And again, *Obey them that have the rule over you; for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give an account*, Heb. 13. 17. and therefore ſeeing they have the ſame names, ordained to the ſame work, to feed God's Flock, to ordain Paſtors and Elders, to rule and govern the Church of God, there cannot be a Superiority of Power and Juriſdiction in one Miniſter above another: but I paſs by theſe things, and leave them to your reading of the Scriptures, and obſervations of them; I now come to the Doctrine intended, the Guardian and Protection *Paul* committed his *Epheſians* unto, *God and the Word of his Grace, &c.* Whence note.

Doct. *That God and the Word of his Grace, are the beſt Security and Comfort, a departing Miniſter can commit his People unto.*

When the Father of a Family dies, he commits his Wife and Children to his moſt faithful, truſty, and aſſured Friends: And when a Miniſter departeth from and leaveth his People, it lyeth him upon, in reſpect of his Office, Prudence, Deſire, and Affection of their Eternal Welfare, to commit them to the beſt Protecti-

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on and Proviſion he can: and which is the beſt, we ſee in the inſtance and caſe of *Paul*, who, if there had been a better, would have made uſe of it. Such were the Dangers by perſecution and infection they were to meet with; ſuch was the love he bore to them, that he thought the beſt Security and Comfort could not be too good for them; he commended them *to God*, and the *Word of his Grace*; than which, there could not be a better found. The Doctrine contains two parts; 1. *A Dereliction*; 2. *A Protection*: that a loſs; this a Proviſion to make up that loſs: that, a ground and occaſion of Sorrow; this, a ground and occaſion of Comfort: that expoſeth to Danger; this defends from Danger, ſecures in Danger, and delivers out of Danger. I ſhall a little open the Sore (much I need not, time and experience will declare it) and then I will ſhew you the Plaiſter, and apply it. The Sore we ſee in *Pauls* departure, and experience it in our ſelves: He takes his leave of the Miniſters of *Epheſus*; and I of you. I ſhall take the Doctrine in two parts. Firſt obſerve.

Obſ. That Miniſters muſt not expect a quiet and ſetled condition in this world: their reſidence amongſt their People is not immoveable, and inalterable, but they and their People muſt part aſunder: as providence brought them together at the firſt, and continues them for a while together; ſo ſometimes it ſuffers them to be parted aſunder. The Seeds-man you know ſtands not ſtill in one place, but goes from one part of the field unto another, according to the will and appointment of his Maſter. Miniſters are God's Seeds-men, and the World is his field, wherein the Seed of his Word is ſown; and he calls them from one place and country to another, and they muſt obey: they are his ſpiritual Clouds, to carry the Rain and Dew of their Miniſtry

Miniſtry, to water the Seed ſown: and as natural clouds are broken by the ſtormy winds, and carried hither and thither, to water, refreſh and enrich the Earth; ſo theſe ſpiritual Clouds, God's Garden-pots, are ſquandred, and carried up and down by the ſtorms of Perſecution, to water, refreſh, and make fruitful the Garden, the Church of God. Upon the Perſecution that was at *Jeruſalem*, the Diſciples were ſcattered up and down, *Preaching the Goſpel and the Kingdom of God*, Acts 8. *When they perſecute you*, ſaith our Saviour, *in one city, flee ye to another*. I need no demonſtrations, and inſtances, to evidence the Truth of the Doctrine; the Experience of the Prieſts & Prophets under the Law; of the Apoſtles after the times of our Saviour, and the Miniſters of the Primitive times of the Goſpel, are abundant Manifeſtations of the truth of this Doctrine; and our own experience this day can ſet the ſeal to it, not only I, but hundreds, yea, it may be thouſands more are this day ſinging their funeral Dirges, and with *Paul*, taking their leave of their beloved People. What a ſtrange Mortality is now in *England!* did ever *England*, nay, did ever the Chriſtian World, hear of ſuch a Mortality, at the ſame inſtance of time? how diſmal is the day of St. *Bartholomew!* On this day was *Jeruſalem*, once the Glory and Beauty of the world, ſacked by *Titus* and *Veſpaſian*. On the Eve of this day, began that bloody Maſſacre in *Paris*. On this day is a great part of *Englands* Miniſtry ſlain; ſlain not in their perſons, but in their Offices. The diſmal tranſactions that have befallen the Church of God this day, deſerve to be engraved in deep and in indeleble Characters, on Pillars of the blackeſt Marble, that the Ages and Generations to come, may reade, and weep ſhowers of tears, to quench Jeruſalems Flames, to waſh and bathe the Wounds, of the poor maſſacred Chriſtians,

Christians, and bewail *Englands* loss. But I forbear any more enlargements, I come to the grounds and reasons of it.

1. The first reason, *Is barrenness under the means of Grace.* When God bestows upon a People and Nation means of Grace, he expects they should thrive up and grow in Grace, and bring forth Fruits to his Glory; but if they remain barren, he removes the means from them. When a man hath taken in a piece of ground, to make a Garden or Vineyard of, and hath taken pains, and laid out cost upon it, to fence it, to manure it, to plant it with the choicest Fruit, and finest Flowers, he expects a proportionable fruitfulness for the satisfaction, and recompence for his cost and pains; and if after all is done, and many years expectations and waitings, it remains unfruitful, and disappoints his expectations, he withholds his cost, care and pains, he will fence it no more, dig it no more, he will not do any thing more unto it: Even thus the unfruitfulness of a People under means provoketh God to remove means: God chose the People of the Jews before all other Nations of the world, to be his pleasant Vineyard, *Isa.*5.11. he did every thing requisite for ornament and security, for fruitfulness and prosperity; he fenced it; he pickt out the stones from it; he built a tower and a winepress, and planted it with the choicest Vine; and what could have been done more, that hath not been done to it, vers. 23. *but when he looked for Grapes, behold wild grapes!* he looked for *Judgment, but behold Oppression! for Righteousness, but behold a cry!* ver. 7. *and what will God do to his Vineyard? will he fence it*, prune it, water it any more? No, no, but he will lay it open to the incursion of enemies, and they shall make it a desolation; *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall*

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be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it ſhall be troden down, ver. 5. Yea, God would remove the Ordinances of his Word, the Means of Grace and Glory from it; *And I will command the Clouds they rain no rain upon it!* that is, my Prophets ſhall no more inſtruct them, no more admoniſh and exhort them, the rain of their Miniſtry ſhall no more fall upon them, *ver.* 6. And this ſame Judgment our Saviour threatens againſt the *Jews* in his dayes, becauſe of their barrenneſs. And therefore I ſay unto you, that *the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof*, Mat. 21. 43. And when God had waited eight hundred years upon the Jewiſh Polity, and after all means, they remained barren, yea, brought forth *wild grapes*, under the pains of his Prophets, of his Son, of his Apoſtles, they would not believe and receive him and his Goſpel, God flings them aſide, and takes no more pains with them; and therefore we find the Apoſtle, when they would not imbrace the Goſpel, leaving them, ſaying, *Be it known therefore unto you, that the Salvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it*, Acts 28. 28. When the old World degenerated into prophaneſs, wantoneſs, ſuperſtition and idolatry, and was drowned in voluptuouſneſs, and all the means God had uſed, and all the pains he had taken with them by his Spirit in his Prophets were in vain; Threatnings would not affright and drive them from ſin, nor Promiſes draw them to piety and purity of Religion: God determines to let them alone, and take no more pains with them. *My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with Man*, Gen. 6. 3.

When the *Jews* in captivity were rebellious, and would not be wrought upon by the preaching of *Ezekiel*, God tells him, that *he ſhould not be a Reprover to them, but that his tongue ſhould cleave to the roof of his mouth*, Ezek. 3. 26.

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VVhat is become of thoſe ſeven famous Churches of *Aſia*, of which this of *Epheſus* was one, to whom *John* wrote? are they not become the ſeat of *Gog* and *Magog*, under the Turkiſh blindneſs and ſuperſtition! And why? becauſe they degenerated from their primitive purity, vigor and fruitfulneſs, into corruptions in Doctrine and Worſhip, into Spiritual lethargy and barrenneſs: They were planted a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed; but they turned into the degenerate Plant of a ſtrange Vine. And therefore if you aſk me the reaſon, why God hath ſuffered ſo many Miniſters to be removed from his People, and ſo many Lights in the Nation, to be put under a buſhel and obſcured? I muſt needs anſwer, Barrenneſs! barrenneſs! *Englands* barrenneſs is one great cauſe why ſo many of her Miniſters mouths ore ſtopped. *England* for many generations, eſpecially of latter years, hath enjoyed great plenty of Goſpel-enjoyments: God hath ſeemed to be at extraordinary coſt and pains with her, in ſending into his Vineyard pious and painful Miniſters, who have been willing and diligent to imploy their talent and talents for the converſion of ſouls, and building them up in Grace. But what is the fruit it yeelds under ſuch multiplied coſt and pains? doth it bring forth ſuitable and ſeaſonable fruit? No! no! May not God ſay of *England*, as once of *Iſrael*, England *is an empty Vine, bringing forth fruit unto it ſelf?* Hoſ. 10. 1. He may ſay to *England*, Theſe three years, theſe ten, theſe twenty years, theſe forty, theſe hundred years and more have I come ſeeking fruit, but find none! Alas, how many thouſands amongſt us have leaves, but no fruit! how many have God and Chriſt in their mouths, but Sin and Satan in their hearts and lives! how many have a name to live, and yet are dead! how many are gilded, but not golden Chriſtians; making beautiful

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and glorious the outside, when within they are full of deadness and rottenness! Yea, it were well if there were no worse (though these are too bad) amongst us; if they were leaf-bearing trees only. But alas, we find an *Egypt* in *Goshen!* a *Sodom* in *Israel!* abundance of the Vines of *Sodom*, and pregnant Grapes of *Gomorrah* in the Vineyard of God! *He looked for Grapes, but behold wild Grapes! for Judgment, but behold Oppression! for Righteousness, but behold a Cry!* He looked for Knowledge, Repentance, Reformation, but behold gross darkness of Ignorance, Impenitency, Presumption, persevering in sin! He looked that *England* should have been his pleasant Vineyard; but, alas, it is a Desart Land, a barren Wilderness, a Land abounding with thorns, bryars and brambles. How doth Ungodliness, like an overflowing inundation, spread it self through the whole Nation! in all places, in all societies of men, in Cities, in Countries, Towns and Families! What abundance of Pride, Prophaness, Whoredom and Debauchedness! what abundance of Drunkenness, Swearing, and Prophanation of the Lord's Day is now amongst us! In a word, what sins were there abounding in *Sodom*, that are not committed amongst us! and all this, after the enjoyment of God's Word for the space of many generations. How many amongst us began to loath the Manna of God's Word, and to turn aside after false Lights, taking fantastical and deluding apprehensions for Divine Illuminations; crying down the morality of the Sabbath, and publick Assemblies, and voting the Ministry of *England* Antichristian! And have not these things caused many Congregations to want Manna & Ministers both? is it not just with the Lord, when the pains and cost he hath been at for us these hundreds of years and more, are no better requited, to withhold cost and pains for the

future? VVhich of you having entruſted a ſon or ſervant with a ſtock of money to trade with in the world, and gain advantages by it, when you ſee them not only negligent and idle, but prodigal and laviſhing in exorbitant courſes, would ſtill entruſt them with more? would you not rather take from them what they yet had? And do you not think God is as careful of his Sabbaths, VVord and Ordinances, and ſeaſons of Grace, as you are of your Coin? And if you will not add freſh ſupplies to a ſtate-waſting and conſuming ſon, ſurely God will not alwayes continue Miniſters and means of Grace unto a barren and unfruitful people. How great and vaſt is the ſtock of Goſpel-enjoyments, ſeaſons and opportunities of Grace, that God hath entruſted *England* with, and yet very barren? how many Sabbaths, and yet in vain! how many Sermons, and yet in vain? how many Threatnings, Promiſes, Entreaties, and yet in vain! how many ſtrivings of the Spirit, and yet in vain! How hath God fed this Nation with the fineſt of the Flower, and beſt of the VVheat, and made the Rock to drop with Honey, and yet how lean, wonderfully lean are the ſouls of theſe Nations, like *Pharoah's* lean Kine, in the enjoyment of thrice ſeven years of plenty of the Goſpel! how hath he made his Clouds to rain upon you, even to the emptying and waſting of themſelves, and yet in vain! Are you not Rocks and Mountains, hard and barren now even as before! how little Reformation in your Pariſh, in your Families! how little are Husbands and VVives, how little are Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants reformed! how little is Religion and God's VVorſhip ſet up in your Families! how little do you endeavour to bring your VVives, your Huſbands, your Children and Servants to a ſaving knowledge of God! how little do you catechiſe and in-

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ſtruct them! and how little do you labour to ſee Chriſt formed in the hearts of your domeſtick relations! How few old ſins do you leave! how few new duties do you take up and practiſe! How little do you endeavour to perform duties in a more holy, humble, and fervent manner than before! May not his Miniſters cry out in the language of the Prophet, they have laboured in vain, they have ſpent their ſtrength in vain? And judg I pray you, Sirs, is it not juſt with the Lord, when our Nation, our Pariſhes, your Families remain unfruitful after ſuch multiplied coſt and pains, and this for ſo many years; is it not juſt with the Lord now to ſay, *England*, ſuch Towns and Pariſhes, ſuch Families, ſuch Perſons are given to barrenneſs, let them alone, I will command the Clouds they rain no Rain upon them?

2. The Second ground and reaſon of a Miniſters removal from a People, is thoſe perſecutions and afflictions that befal them. Sometimes the Perſecution falls upon the Church in general, upon People and Paſtors, and then Miniſters cannot with that clearneſs and juſtifiableneſs leave their Flocks; as when ſome Miniſters only are aimed at. God's Church is compared to a Lilly among Thorns, to a flock of Sheep amongſt Wolves; and *Noahs* Ark upon the deluge, toſſed to and fro with ſtorms and tempeſts upon the Sea of this troubleſome world. There is an irreconcileable enmity betwixt the intereſt of Chriſt, and the intereſt of Satan; and therefore no wonder if the gates of Hell, the policy and power of infernal darkneſs are united and combined againſt the Church of Chriſt. The Devil is called a *Red Dragon*, Rev. 12. A *Dragon*, denoting his hurtful, poiſonous and deſtructive nature; and a *red Dragon*, denoting his cruelty, that he is delighted in, and becoloured with the blood of

God's People; and all the ſtorms and perſecutions that have befallen the Church, he hath raiſed them; He labours with might and main, with rage and fury, by impriſonments, by baniſhments, by fire and faggot, to eradicate, and totally to deſtroy Chriſt's Kingdom and Intereſt out of the world; either by falling upon the Church in general, or upon her Lights, Guides, and Watch-men in particular. Remove the Watch-men, and the Garriſon is eaſily ſurprized and taken: put out the Lights, and you are ſurrounded with darkneſs: take away the Guide, and the Travellor is eaſily ſeduced; and therefore Satan ſometimes in his perſecutions, aimes chiefly at pious, learned, painful, and zealous Miniſters; becauſe they moſt of all, like burning and ſhining Lights, ſquander and diſpel the darkneſs of his kingdom, diſcover and manifeſt his helliſh and ſubtile ſtratagems and methods of deceiving poor ſouls, and lead them from them, into the wayes of Piety and Salvation; becauſe they are as God's *Bonarges*'s, and *Barnabaſſes*, battering down the walls of his kingdom, preſumption, ſecurity and diſpaire, by awakening men and women out of their ſpiritual lethargy, and letting them ſee their danger and misery, that they may eſcape it: and on the other hand, by comforting, raiſing up ſuch as are dejected, and under temptations to deſpaire; and on both hands, leſſen and weaken his intereſt in the world: and therefore the Devil to ſecure his own intereſt, and to oppoſe, to hinder, and to deſtroy the Intereſt of Chriſt, will have them burnt or baniſhed, ſilenced, their mouths ſtopped, that no more lightning and thunder, no more Cordials and Comforts come from them, or by violent, on-ſet of hot Perſecution, make them run and fly for it: *When they perſecute you in one City, flee ye into another.*

And

And as the intereſt of Satan is one ground of Perſecution, ſo the irreconcilable enmity betwixt the Intereſt of Chriſt, and the ſinful corrupt intereſts of ungodly men, is another ground of Perſecution upon the Church, of baniſhing, impriſoning, and ſilencing Miniſters; to be a friend to the one, is to be an enemy to the other: *The friendſhip of the world*, ſaith *James*, *is enmity with God: and whoſoever will be a friend of the world, is a enemy of God*, Jam. 5.4. If Miniſters dare, and will comply with the ſinful intereſts of great men, and become Court-flatterers, and Paraſites to Kings, either to preach up, or not to preach down their State-Corruptions and Wickedneſs, they ſhall have peace and protection. *If you were of the world*, ſaith our Saviour to his Diſciples; that is, of the principles, cuſtomes, faſhions of the world, *the world would love you; for ſhe loves her own*, *Joh.* 15.19. And this was the reaſon why Antichriſtian falſe doctrines were ſo much imbraced in the dayes of *John*, becauſe they were doctrines of the world, doctrines pleaſing fleſh and blood, and ſutable to the principles, cuſtomes and intereſts of ſinful men: *They are of the world, therefore they ſpeak of the world, and the world heareth them*, 1 John 4.5. Never was there any Intereſt of Great men, ſo ſinful and corrupt, nor any Religion owned, countenanced, and eſtabliſhed by Authority, ſo ſuperſtitious, idolatrous and abominable, as to want Defenders and Promoters; ſome for favour, ſome for fear; ſome for ſecular advantages, to preſerve and keep what they have, or to gain honours, preferments and riches by it; others from their choice and election, loving and delighting in that way. The way and means that *Jeroboam* and his Council contrived, to withdraw and keep the People from going to *Jeruſalem* to ſacrifice, and to ſecure the ten revolted Tribes

to him & his posterity, was abominable idolatry; against which they had many caviates and cautions from God; for which their fore-fathers had been severely punished, *Exod.* 32. *Judg.* 2. 10, 11, 12, 13. & 3. 5, 6, 7, 8. yea, for this their famous King *Solomon*, lately deceased, was threatned with the renting of part of his Kingdom from his Posterity, and verified in this revolt, 1 *Kings.* 11. Yet notwithstanding all this, the sinful contrivance of *Jeroboam* wanted not owners and promoters; for besides the Courtiers and the common People, the lowest of whom he consecreated Priests to the Golden Calves; many of the Priests of the Lord, who feared suffering more than sinning, complied with, 1 *King.* 12. 27, 28, 31. & 13. 33. 2 *Chron.* 11. And how abundantly were the owners and promoters of *Ahabs* Idolatry, and *Baals* worship multiplied; when the Prophets of *Baal* were four hundred and fifty; and the Prophets of the *Groves* four hundred? Judge of the harvest by the tythes, 1 *King.* 18. 19. and the ten Tribes so exceedingly infected with his leaven, that of those many thousands there, there remained but seven thousand only that had not bowed the knee to *Baal*, 1 *King.* 19. 10. all which had the security and protection of their Kings and Councils, when the other were oppressed. Such then that turn with every tide, saile with every wind, and like water, be of the same colour as the ground it runs over, that can favour and approve *Jeroboams* contrivance, to secure his revolted interest; such as can swallow down *Ahabs* Idolatry, and approve *Jezebels* contrived mock-fast, and her charging *Naboth* with Treason and Blasphemy, as commendable State-pollicy to get his Vineyard: Such as can pull down *Ahabs* Abomination, throw down *Baals* Temple, and bring fire and fagots to burn his consecreated vessels, and a bloody

bloody ſword to ſlaughter his Prieſts; and when all is done, adhere cloſe to the ſins of *Jeroboam*, that he may become a friend and favorite to the aſpiring and proſpering *Jehu*: Such miniſters as have *lunacem fidem*, as St. *Auſtin* ſaid of the *Pelagians*, that are immutable only in the mutableneſs of their judgements and opinions, that can enlarge, leſſen, & change their conſciences, principles & practices according to all changes, riſing and prevailing parties and intereſts; ſuch as theſe ſhall never ſuffer Perſecution, nor be divorced from their People: The bowing ruſhes, and yeelding reeds, ſtand ſafe, when the ſturdy Oaks are rent by the ſtormy winds: but ſuch Miniſters as are pious and faithful to diſcharge their Duty and Conſcience; and *lift up their voice like a trumpet*, to tell *Iſrael* of HER *Sin*, and the *Houſe of Jacob* of *THEIR Tranſgreſſions*; that can neither preach up, nor connive at, but preach down the Sins of the *Times* and *Places* they live in, ſhall undoubtedly be hated and perſecuted. What was the reaſon our Saviour was ſo much hated and perſecuted by the ſeveral intereſts and parties among the Jews, when they ſought to entrapt him to ſtone him, to throw him down the hill and break his neck? was it not becauſe he teſtified againſt them, that their *works were evil? John 7. 7.* And if they have done thus to the Maſter, what will they do to the Servants? if they have perſecuted him, they will perſecute theſe alſo; and therefore our Saviour fore-arms his Diſciples and Miniſters, in fore-telling them, that the *world* would *hate* and *perſecute them*, *becauſe ye are not of the world*; that is, becauſe your Doctrines are not of the principles, faſhions, cuſtomes of the world, but contrary to them, therefore the *world will hate you*, John 15. 19. your Doctrine is an holy, heavenly Doctrine, croſſing and beating down, and condemning the ſins

and corrupt intereſts of men, therefore you ſhall be *hated*: if your Doctrine gave liberty to luſt, and would let men alone in their ſins, they would let you alone. *John* Baptiſts for plain dealing with *Herod* concerning his *Herodias*, had his Head ſmote off. When the Doctrine of Miniſters oppoſeth corrupt gain, and beateth down the ſinful advantages and profits of ungodly men, they will rather part with the Truth of the Goſpel, drive it and Miniſters away, rather than loſe their ſinful and corrupt advantages. When *Paul* had preached down the Idolatry of *Epheſus*, and had turned much people away from it, *Demetrius* a Silver-ſmith, a maker of Shrines for *Diana*, fearing hereby he ſhould loſe his idolatrous profit, raiſeth an uproar, and fills the City with confuſion, *Acts* 19. It is an uſual thing for *idolatrous Prieſts*, and *Paraſites* of Kings, falſely to accuſe God's Miniſters of Treaſon, Sedition and Conſpiracy againſt Kings; not ſo much out of love to Kings as to themſelves. Thus *Amaziah*, an idolatrous Prieſt, accuſeth *Amos* to *Jeroboam*, of Treaſon, and his Sermons were ſo *ſeditious*, &c. that *the Land was not able to bear him*; and that his Conſpiracies were not acted in corners, or in another Kingdom, but openly in his Kingdom, *in the midſt of thy People Iſrael*; where was the Court, and greateſt confluence of ſubjects, *Amos* 7. 10, 11. but ſelf was at the bottome of all this; *Amaziah* had much dignity and profit by the place, and therefore hated *Amos* heartily, becauſe he forbad the people to come any more to *Bethel*, but to ſhun it as a place infected with Superſtition and Idolatry, *Amos* 5.5. How frequent is it to undermine by forged cavillations, ſuch, whoſe Piety and Zeal for God and his Honour, preach down thoſe ſinful wayes, by which many gain their advancements and advantages? Sometimes they are accuſed as dangerous and

deſtructive

deſtructive to the Peace & Safety of the Nation where they live, and that nothing but Baniſhment or Death will ſerve the turn. *Haman* accuſed the *Jews*, and told *Ahaſuerus*, *It was not for the Kings profit to ſuffer them*, Eſth. 3. 8. The God of Heaven deliver us from ſuch *Prieſts* and *Hamans!* and clear up our Innocency as the noon Sun; and turn their wicked deſigns upon their own heads; and hang all falſe accuſing *Hamans* on the ſame Gallowes they rear for *Mordecai!* All thoſe Prieſts in Iſrael that feared the Lord, and durſt not comply with *Jeroboams* idolatrous way to ſecure the ten Tribes, were thruſt out of their Poſſeſſions, and from executing the Prieſts Office to the Lord, leſt they ſhould antidote the People, and keep them from cloſing with it, 2 *Chron.* 11. 13, 14. The Prophets that would not connive at the Idolatries and Whoredoms of *Jezebel*, but preached them down, and endeavoured to arm, fence & antidote the People againſt that poyſonous leaven, and to draw them to the Purity of God's Worſhip, were all of them perſecuted, ſome ſlain, ſome hid by *Obadiah* by fifties in Caves, and fed with bread and water, 1 *King.* 18. 4. When *Elijah* had by a wonder convinced the People, *That God was the Lord*; and the People, according to his command, had ſlain *Baals* Prieſts, *Jezebel* threatneth him, and *Elijah* flyeth for it, 1 *Kings* 18. 38, 4.—19. 1, 2, 3, 4.

It would be tedious to recount the ſeveral inſtances of Good men, who upon the prevailing of corrupt intereſts and ſinful men, have been forced to fly, and leave their charge. *Paul* was let down by a wall in a basket, through a window, to eſcape the hands of the Governour of *Damaſcus*, *Acts* 9. 25. *Moſes*, who *was faithful in the Houſe of God*, underſtanding that *Pharoah* intended to deſtroy him, *fled into the Land of Mediah*,

diab, *Exod.* 2. 14, 15. We reade of our Saviour, that upon ſeveral occaſions he did withdraw, hide, and ſecure himſelf from the rage of the people. When *Herod* deſigned to deſtroy the Babes of *Bethlehem*, Chriſt was with his father and mother ſent into *Egypt*, *Mat.* 2. 14. He withdrew when the Phariſees held a Council to deſtroy him, *Mat.* 12. 13, 14. He fled from the Tyranny of *Herod*, when he had cut off *John Baptiſts* head, *Mat.* 14. 12, 13. He hid himſelf when the Jews would have ſtoned him, *John* 8. 59. and conveyed himſelf out of the multitude, when they would have caſt him down an hill and broke his neck. What ſhall I ſay concerning *Chryſoſtom*, *Cyprian*, *Athanaſius*, and other learned and renowned Fathers of the Church, who were often baniſhed, and removed from their People? Again, we reade in *Rev.* 11. 7, 8. that before Antichriſt ſhall fall, he ſhall make war againſt the two VVitneſſes. By Witneſſes ſome underſtand Magiſtrates and Miniſters. *Magiſtrates* are God's Repreſentatives amongſt men, *Pſal.* 82. 6. Witneſſes and Demonſtrations of God's Soveraignty, in ruling, in puniſhing the wicked, in defending and rewarding the Good and Virtuous. *Miniſters* are God's Witneſs, to declare, aſſert, plead and maintain God's Cauſe and Intereſt, his ſtupendious Work and glorious Attributes in Mans Redemption.

Some by Witneſſes underſtand Miniſters only, and againſt theſe the Beaſt ſhall make war, and by a powerful prevailing of his intereſt, and of a prophane and corrupt party ſhall ſlay them; ſlay them not in their Perſons, but in their Offices; it is not a natural but a civil death, a routing them from their Offices, and ſuſpending them from the execution of their duties, whether Magiſtrates, Miniſters, or both. The ground and reaſons why I take the killing of the Witneſſes

neſſes to be a civil, not a natural death, is in the word of verſe 9. *And they of all People, Kindreds and Tongues and Nations ſhall ſee their dead bodies three dayes and an half; and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.* Now it is barbarous inhumanity and cruelty to bury men alive, to put them quick into the grave; and if they were naturally dead it would be undecent, loathſome, and unnatural to keep them above ground, expoſing them to every viſitant and ſpectator, and to the tearing and devouring ravenouſneſs of birds and beaſts of prey. Not to ſuffer them to be put in graves, if naturally dead, is contrary to the inſtinct of nature: for of thoſe numberleſs number of birds in the air, we may ſuppoſe all that are dead are not killed, but many thouſands dye naturally by reaſon of age. And yet of thoſe many thouſands we find very few or none at all; becauſe nature hath taught them when the time of death draws nigh to provide themſelves graves by creeping into hollow trees, or holes of the ground, or ſome courteous bird covers them with leaves.

Further, theſe *Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues* that ſaw their dead bodies, were friends, Pious and Religious perſons, that cordialy owned loved and affected them; and the more love and affection, the greater care of a decent and commendable interment. But if you ſay, they might be enemies that out of malice to expoſe them unto greater ſhame and contempt, would not ſuffer them to be buried, it cannot be; becauſe it is contrary to the rules of Policy: for their dead bodies lying three dayes and an half, underſtand three Prophetical daies and an half, that is, three years and an half unburied, would infect the air, and ſo produce hurtful and deſtructive diſeaſes; ſo that ſelf-preſervation would engage them to inter them, if they were naturally dead. And in the 11. verſe, after the

the daies of their death were accomplished, *They heard a great voice from Heaven saying, Come up hither*; so that if they were naturally dead, this must be a corporal resurrection, a resurrection of the bodies slain; and before the great and general Resurrection at the last Day, which is contrary to the Scriptures, which mention but one general Resurrection of the body, and impertinent to this place, where there is no mention made of the Day of Judgment, nor of any of the transactions of that Day. And by *a voice from Heaven* in that place, verse 11. I understand, with submission to more deep, learned, and grave judgments, the Supream Authority of a Nation, that by enacted Laws shall give liberty and Authority to the slain Witnesses, to re-assume the publick exercise of their Ministry and Magistracy of which they were before deprived; so then I conclude from the rules of decency, from the instinct of nature, the respective and tender care of love and affection, from the Rules and Reasons of Policy, from the harmony of Scriptures, from the barbarousness of burying persons alive, that it is not a natural but a civil death, slain in their Offices, not in their Persons. Now the place where their dead bodies shall be slain, and lye unburied, is said, *In the streets of the great City, called Sodom and Egypt*: by the City is meant *Rome*, compared to *Sodom* for Uncleaness and Whoredom, to *Egypt* for Idolatry and Cruelty against God's People. By the *Streets of the great City*, you are not to understand it litteraly and locally of the streets of *Rome*, but of several Nations and Kingdoms that did belong to Antichrist, that were under the Papal Power and parts of his Dominion, as streets are parts and appurtenances of a City. For the words in verse 9. *They of the People and Kindreds and Tongues and Nations should see their dead bodies*, seem to me to imply

ply and intimate the ſeveral Nations and Kingdoms where they ſhould be ſlain; which Kingdoms having ſhaked off the Romiſh Antichriſtian Iron yoak and bondage, ſhould enjoy the pure and powerful preaching of the Word, and adminiſtration of Sacraments in ſome comfortable manner and meaſure, by a conſtant ſucceſſion of pious, painful and learned Miniſters, whereby thoſe Nations and Kingdoms ſhould be much enlightened; but before the number of Antichriſt be run up, and his period accompliſhed, *Rev.* 13. 18. theſe Nations called *the ſtreets of the great City*, ſhall ſuffer an Eclipſe in their Miniſters, they ſhould be laid aſide as dead men, and become uſeleſs in their publick exerciſes of their Miniſtry. And during the ſpace of their civil death, they ſhall have the warm hearts and affections of the People, they will not ſuffer them to be put into graves alive, and buried quick, but ſtill own them as Miniſters deſire, long, pray for their reſtoration and inſtalment into their Offices and Places again.

Thus amongſt many Reaſons I have given you two, why Miniſters may not alwayes expect a continued reſidence amongſt, and miniſtration to, their People; Firſt, becauſe of barrenneſs under means. Secondly becauſe of theſe afflictions that light upon the Church and her Lights, Guides and Watchmen.

Now for *Application.*

Firſt, to *Miniſters.* Secondly, to *People.*

A Word to both.

1. Miniſters ſhould labour to do all the good they can to, and among the People to whom they are Miniſters. From us, from us our People expect relief: and how ſhould we endeavor to adminiſter all the helps & advantages we can for their Salvation; in removing

of

of Scandals, in healing Diviſions, in confuting Hereſies, to beat down wickedneſs, and demoliſh the ſtrongholds of Satan! The conſcientious Phyſitian, when he ſeeth the health and life of the Patient committed to him, how diligent is he in watching with, and attending his Patient? how curious & exact in obſerving the pulſe, the ſymptomes, workings, nature and ſtrength of the diſeaſe? how careful and diligent to apply proper Remedies and Phyſick; ſometimes Corroſives, ſometimes Cordials, and all to reſtore health, and prolong life to his Patient? How much more diligent ſhould Miniſters, Phyſicians of ſouls be, in obſerving the ſeveral Maladies, and Soul-diſeaſes of their People, and to apply proper Remedies? ſo many perſons, ſo many patients! ſo many ſins, ſo many diſeaſes! ſome are brutiſh and unteachable; ſome are weak, others dull; ſome perverſe, and many ungrateful. How ſhould they endeavour to make the brutiſh to underſtand; to confirm the weak, and make them ſtrong; to quicken the dull, and make them zealous and fervent; to allure the perverſe, and and make them tractable; to win the ungrateful, and make them kind? what is the body to the ſoul? or life temporal in a troubleſome world, to Life Eternal in unſpeakable Happineſs? the Excellency of the object ſhould heighten our eſteem, and double our diligence. Pretious, pretious Souls, lie at the Stake. One Soul is of more value than ten thouſand worlds. Jeſus Chriſt ſhed his pretious Blood for *the Redemption of ſouls*, but not for the *honours, dignitys & riches of the world*. Now either Heaven or Hell: And how ſhould the joyes of the one, and the torments of the other, and the eternity of both, add indefatigableneſs to our labours, unwearied vigilancy to our perſpective care, invincibleneſs to our courage, irrefragableneſs to our arguments,

ments, and ſteep our perſwaſions in tears, and all to keep you from lodging your ſelves in everlaſting burnings, and bring you to an Enjoyment of the beatifical Viſion of the bleſſed God! In this decriped age of the world, the Devils ſeem to be poſſeſſed with ſome ſpirits worſe than themſelves; they turn every ſtone, they improve the dregs of their malice, the height of their power, if by any means, by ſecret perſwaſions, by hoſtile invaſions, by ſtrange deluſions; turning themſelves into *Angels of Light*, that they may drag one ſoul to Hell: and ſhall not Miniſters take much more pains to bring them to Heaven? *Paul* was unwearied in his doing, invincible in his ſuffering: How many Cities and Countries did he enlighten with the Goſpel? *Jeruſalem, Illyricum, Damaſcus, Arabia, Antioch, Achaja, Cilicia, Cyprus, Epirus, Galatia, Myſia, Lycaonia, Pamphilia, Phyſidia, Phrygia, Selutia, Syria, Troas.* Miniſters ſhould make the Salvation of Souls their ſtudy, their care, their imployment, their practice, their whole buſineſs. We muſt *wait on our Miniſtry*, Rom. 12. 7. give our ſelvs continually *to it*, *Acts* 6. 4. We muſt fulfill our *Miniſtry*, *Col.* 4. 7. The ſoundneſs, fatneſs, fruitfulneſs of the Flock, is an honour to the Shepherd. The recovered health, ſtrength, life, of a ſick, weak, dying patient, is an honour to the Phyſician. It is the glory of Kings, according to the rules of the great Statesman, πόλιν τε δυσυχοῦσαν παῦσαι, καὶ καλως πραττουσαν διαφυλάξαι, καὶ μεγάλην ἐκ μικρᾶς ποιήσαι, to eaſe and heal their Cities and Kingdoms of thoſe miſeries and calamities they groan and languiſh under, to ſecure their preſent peace and proſperity, to enlarge their bounds, and of ſmall to make them great. If the *Roman* Emperour gloried when he ſaid of *Rome*, *Lateritiam inveni, marmoream reliqui*; I found it built with Brick, but left it built with Marble. So it is a great honour

for

for Miniſters to do much good to their People; to ſtrengthen the diſeaſed, to heal the ſick, to bind up the broken, to bring back that which was driven away, and ſeek that which was loſt, *Ezek.* 34. 16. When of Lead, Braſs, Iron and Tin, they make them Gold and Jewels for God: when of Lyons they make them Lambs; of Rebels, they make them loyal Subjects, beating their ſpears into pruning hooks, and ſwords into plowſhares: when of a barren Wilderneſs, they make them a fruitful Vineyard. How exceeding great will that Glory be, which God will give at the laſt day, unto his *faithful Miniſters*, when they ſhall ſtand forth before God, his Angels, and all men? *Andrew* bringing with him his *Achaians*, whom by his Miniſtry he hath gained unto Chriſt: *John* with his *Aſians*; *Thomas* with his *Indians*; *Peter* with his *Jews*, and *Paul* with his *Gentiles*; and all the pious and faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, with all the Children God hath given them in their reſpective Ages and Generations; and theſe ſhall be to them a *Crown of Glorying* in the *preſence of Jeſus Chriſt at his coming*, 1 Theſ. 2. 19. and the time for the accompliſhing of all this, at the longeſt, is very ſhort. Death, if no other providence may ſooner than they are aware of, throw them into an incapacity of doing any more good unto their People, how ſhould they labour to do much in a little while? the grand importance of the work, the numerous and potent enemies, that oppoſe and hinder it, the uncertainty and ſhortneſs of time to do it in, ſhould make us wonderfully diligent: ſay and do with *Paul*, *We ſeek not yours, but you*; accounting the winning of ſouls to Chriſt our greateſt gain and glory. *Sed, heu, Quantum diſtamus ab illo!* how many ſay in their practice, *We ſeek not you, but yours*; ſeek the fleece, and neglect the flock? How do Miniſters run and ride, cap

and

and cringe, to get Eccleſiaſtical Dignities and Preferments, & to multiply to themſelves Church-revenues, heaping Steeple upon Steeple, as the Gyants of old, *Pelion* upon *Oſſa*, and upon both theſe *Olympus*, to fill their Coffers, to maintain their Pomp, their full Tables, to provide portions for their Children, or (which is worſe) to adminiſter more abilities of greater ſinning againſt God; and this great and neceſſary work undone, the *diſeaſed* not *ſtrengthened*, the *ſick* not *healed*, the *broken* not *bound up*, that which was *driven away*, not *brought back*, that not *ſought* which was *loſt*: *Wo* to ſuch Shepherds of *Iſrael*, of *England*, and of all Chriſtian Kingdoms in the world, that feed themſelves, that eat the fat, and cloath themſelves with the wooll, but feed not the Flock; but with force and cruelty rule over them, *Ezek.* 34. 2, 3, 4. How deſperate and dreadful is that Charge God layeth upon the Prieſts of *Judah*; his *Watchmen* are *blind*, they are *all ignorant*, they are *all dumb Dogs*, they cannot *bark*, *ſleeping*, *lying down*, and loving to *ſlumber*; yea, they are *greedy Dogs*, that can never have enough; they are *Shepherds* that cannot underſtand; they all look to their own way, every one for gain from his own quarter: *Come ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill our ſelves with ſtrong drink; and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant*, Iſa. 56. 10, 11, 12.

Time will not ſuffer me to open and enlarge upon theſe words; I leave them to your meditations and obſervations: pardon my treſpaſſing upon your patience; the pains is mine, the profit is yours.

2. If Miniſters are not certain of a continued Reſidence amongſt their People, be you then exhorted to make good uſe and improvement of preſent Goſpel-Enjoyments: you are not ſure of a conſtant enjoyment of pious, able, and painful Miniſters; and the

uncertainty of the future, ſhould make us lay in ſtore of proviſion at the preſent, leſt by neglecting preſent opportunities, we run our ſelves upon the damage of a future neceſſity. The Jews were to gather twice ſo much Manna on the ſixth day, as on other dayes, becauſe on the Seventh there was none to be found. The Mariner hoiſeth Sails to the preſent ſeaſonable and right Gales of Wind. The Husbandman layeth hold on the preſent ſeaſonable weather, for the reaping and gathering in of the Fruits of the Earth. And all of you in Summer lay in Proviſion for Winter. Preſent Opportunities neglected, may not in the future be enjoyed. No Manna could be found on the Seventh-day: the Wind turns and ſtands contrary: the Summer is ended, no harveſt, no reaping in Winter. A People that enjoy a faithful and painful Miniſtry, have the Manna of God's Word falling round about them; they have the pleaſant Gales of God's Spirit to waft them nearer to Heaven; they have an harveſt day of, and pleaſant ſeaſons to make proviſion for Glory: but if you neglect preſent Seaſons, you run deſperate hazzards, and adventure your precious ſouls upon great uncertainties. He that ſends his Embaſſadours to day, may call them back to morrow. God hath threatned, his Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with men. The tongue that is ſpeaking to you this day, will be tyed up and ſilenced before the next Sabbath. How miſerable would it have been with *Egypt* in the ſeven years of Famine, if there had not been vaſt proviſions and innumerable ſtore laid up in the ſeven years of plenty! How miſerable would they be pinched with hunger and cold in winter, who have not laid in full and ſutable proviſions in Summer! How miſerable will they be in a famine of God's Word, who have made no proviſion in times of plenty! To be without Miniſtry and Miniſters, without

without Word and Ordinances, is the moſt miſerable and deſtructive want in the world. *Where there is no Viſion the People periſh.* A People without a Paſtour, are without a Watchman to warn and awaken them; without Lights to enlighten them; without Guides to direct and lead them; without Salt to ſeaſon them; without Phyſicians to heal them; without Shepherds to watch over them, to feed and defend them: and the condition of ſuch muſt needs be a miſerable condition. And to have ſuch are as ſpoken of in *Iſa.* 56. 10, 11, 12. *blind* and *dumb*, *covetous* and *greedy*, and *drunkards*: or ſuch as are mentioned in *Ezek.* 34. that are *diſperſers of the Flock*, not diſpenſers of the Word and Ordinances; with force and cruelty to rule over you, will be your croſs, not your comfort. The actions of publick perſons are very influential: as is the Prætor, ſuch are the Citizens: as is the Pedagogue, ſuch are the Children: as is the Paſtor, ſuch are the People; like People and like Prieſt; and how can there chuſe but be Whoredom in *Ephraim*, and Defilement in *Iſrael*, *when the Prieſts commit lewdneſs? Am.* 6. 9, 10. No wonder if that people be made a prey, and brought to nought, whoſe Watchmen are blind, whoſe Preachers are dumb, whoſe Champions are lame, whoſe Phyſicians are ſick, whoſe Salt is unſavory, whoſe Teachers are untaught, whoſe Guides are ignorant of the Way, whoſe Paſtours are Impoſtors, whoſe Pillars are Pollars, fleecing, but not feeding the Flock: Doth not hence ſpring the ruine of the Church, the contempt of the Miniſtry, and all Church Orders and Ordinances, the corruption of manners, a ſinck of ſin, and deluge of prophaneſs; the ſtarving of Charity; the debaſement of Religion; the hazarding of your Graces; the endangering of your ſoules for ever? And for a Chriſtian now to order his converſation

aright, it requires that God's Word ſhould dwell richly in him in all Wiſdom; and to be preſerved ſafe and ſound in infecting times, it is expedient and neceſſary that he be fraught with the impregnable Cordials, and Plague-expelling Antidotes of God's moſt holy Word. This was the Preſervative and Security of that good King, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *I have hid thy Word in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* Therefore, my Brethren, for the glory of God, for the honour of Chriſt, the credit and ornament of your Profeſſion, the rejoycing of your dying Miniſter, and your own Salvation, ſee that you walk in the ſtrength of that Doctrine and Word, I have almoſt for the ſpace of theſe four years delivered unto you, as the Prophet *Elijah* in the ſtrength of the Cake, until you come unto the Mount of God, 1 *Kings* 19.8. *That whether I come again unto you, or be abſent, yet I may hear of your affairs, that your converſation be as becomes the Goſpel; that ye ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel.*

Now I have done with the Sore, [*A Miniſters Departure from his People*] I ſhould now ſhew you the Plaiſter, and apply it. But of this by and by.

SERMON XIV.

by Mr. Thomas Bladon.

Acts 20. 32.

And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified.

Theſe words I have told you are part of *Pauls Valediction* to his Beloved *Epheſians*; the Parts and Arguments whereof I have briefly ſhewed you. In the

the words you have a twofold *Remedy* in opposition to a twofold *Malady*: The first *Malady* was Affliction and Persecution, mentioned in ver. 29. for which the Apostle prescribeth God as the Sovereign *Cure* and *Remedy*; *And now I commend you to God.* The second *Malady* is Infection and Heresie, mentioned ver. 30. for which the Apostle prescribeth God's Word as the best Preservative and Remedy, *And now I commend you to God, and the Word*; which Remedy is further amplified by the title given to it, Grace, *the Word of his Grace.* 2dly, From the precious effects and benefits of the Word, first Edification, secondly Life Eternal, in these words, *which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified.* Then the relative name *Paul* gives to the Ministers of *Ephesus*, *Brethren*, from which word you may remember I gave you this Observation.

Doct. *That true and real Christians are Brethren.* It is not only true in respect of Ministers, but of all Christians, Pastors and People; I have demonstrated it briefly, and briefly improved it by way of Application—— But then secondly, from the Provision of Security and Comfort that *Paul* commendeth his *Ephesians* to at his departure, you had this *Doctrine.*

Doct. *That God, and the Word of his Grace, is the best Security and Comfort a departing Minister can commit his People unto.*

You may remember I took this Doctrine in two, and gave you this Note or Doctrine.

Doct. *That Ministers cannot always expect a continued and uninterrupted Residence amongst their People.*

This I shewed you before and applied it. Now in the last place, and my last opportunity I come to the

Grand *Cure*, and Sovereign *Remedy* for the above named *Maladies*, [*God, and the Word of his Grace.*] The Doctrine is this,

That God, and the Word of his Grace, are the best Security and Comfort a departing Minister can commend his People unto. The Greek word παρατίθεμαι hath divers significations in the New Testament, but in this place and some others, it properly signifies, *Fidei alicujus depositum servandum tradio committo*, we commit something to the care and fidelity of another for security and preservation. Thus our blessed Saviour when he dyed on the Cross, πατερ εις χειρας σου παρατιθεμαι το πνευμα μου; *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, *Luke* 23. 46. And the Apostle *Peter* exhorting the Christians, not to be dispondent and dejected under the Sufferings they met with for Christ's sake, but in the midst of their sufferings, δοξαζοντες τω θεω παρατιθεσθωσαν τας ψυχας, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls unto him, as to a Faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. Thus the Apostle commits these *Ephesian* Ministers, and all the Christians in *Ephesus*, their souls, their bodies, and all the affairs and concernments of that Church, both under Persecution, and in the midst of contagious Heresies and Doctrines, to the defence and protection of God, and to the direction, light, and preservation of his holy Word: So that if you please to give a name to my Text, let it be this, *The departing Pastor's Security and Comfort for his left People, &c.* When the Father of a family lies upon his death-bed, and ready to take his *ultimam vale* of the world, commends his Wife and Children, to the care, counsel and direction, to the defence and protection of his most trusty, faithful, and assured Friends, saying, *I am now going the way of all flesh, and my deare Wife will become a disconsolate*

late Widow, and my tender Children will be fatherless! and I shall no more return to perform the duties of an Husband, and Father to them! no more to counsel and direct them! no more to manage and order their affairs for them! No more to provide for, and maintain them! no more to succour and comfort them! No more to defend them from injuries, and oppressions! No more to right them in their wrongs! And therefore I leave and commend them to you, to be as a Husband to my Widow, and a Father to my Fatherless. I leave them to your love to pity them! I commend them to your wisdome and prudence to counsel and direct them; To your care and faithfulness to manage their affairs for them! I commend them to your justice, to right them in wrongs, and defend them from injuries. Even thus this blessed Apostle going to *Jerusalem*, these *Ephesians should see his face no more.* No more he should fight with beasts, after the manner of men, at *Ephesus.* He should confute the Erroneous and Hereticks no more. No more should he be with them to appease their dissentions, reconcile their divisions, he should maintain the Doctrine of Free-Grace, the purity and simplicity of Gospel-Worship no more. No more to vindicate the Resurrection of the dead. No more to perform amongst them the duties of a vigilent Watch-man, and faithful Minister; to rebuke the Obstinate, and such as walk disorderly; to comfort the Mourners, to strengthen the Weak, to reduce the Wanderer, to raise and recover them that are fallen. And therefore, seeing I shall be no more with you, to do any of these things for you, I leave, *and commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace*; the best security from, and comfort under, both Persecution, and infectious and seducing Doctrine. He is a Watch-man and Shepherd instead of all Shepherds and Watch-men: He is a Teacher instead of all Teachers. And

for a people to be left with such Guardians, when their Minister must depart from them, is *good security* and *comfort* for them. And this I shall shew, first, in respect of God; 2dly, in regard of his Word.

First, To commit you to God, is to commit you to him who is furnished with every thing necessary for Security and Comfort.

1. It is to commit you to the greatest Love. And Love is a strong Security. To be committed to the defence of an enemy, that hates us with deadly hatred, there can be no comfort, no security, but a fearful and trembling expectation, that our *defence* should prove our *destruction*. But Love addeth strength and security to mud-walls, when hatred makes stone-walls full of danger. Hatred seeks the destruction of the object hated, when Love seeks the welfare and protection of the object beloved. Τὸ φιλεῖν δὲ τὸ βόλεσθαί τε οἰέσθαι ἀναθὰ τῶ φιλομένω; *Birds build their nests on high, in close obscure places, and spare their own crows, to secure and fill their young ones.* The most timerous creatures grow most resolute, and expose themselves to danger and death, in combating to preserve their young ones, and all from that storgie and affection Nature hath implanted in them. What will not Parents do and venture to preserve their tender babes in danger? they'l venture upon pikes and swords, upon wild beasts, they'l venture through fire and water to save them. And if there be such love in the creature, surely there is much more in the Creator: their greatest plenitude is but a drop to his immeasurable Ocean. Love in the creature is a *concrete*, finite and imperfect, but in God it is an *abstract*, infinite, and Perfection it self. *God*, saith *John*, *is Love*, 1 Joh. 4. 8. and this Love of God to his People, is an all-conquering Love: this stirrs up God to stand as a skreen between his People and

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danger, and *primum mobile* of their protection. What is the reaſon that all the policies and power of infernal ſpirits, all the ſtratagems of the Devil's Agents, all the black curſings and bloody execrations of ungodly men; all the Popiſh Fulminations and thundrings of *Anathema's* againſt God's People take no more effect? what is the reaſon that there is no Inchantment againſt *Jacob*, nor Divination againſt *Iſrael*? It is God's Love that ſhields off all. *Balaam*, you know, following the wages of unrighteouſneſs, attempted to have curſed *Iſrael*; but this Love of God oppoſed it, and turned the Curſe into a Bleſſing, *Deut.* 23. 5. *The Lord thy God would not hearken unto* Balaam; *but the Lord thy God turned the Curſe into a Bleſſing, becauſe he loved thee.* Hence it is God oppoſeth the oppoſers of his People, and deſtroyeth their deſtroyers, ſaying, *Touch not mine Anointed*, and *do my Prophets no harm.* The moſt glorious Potentates & proſperous Kingdoms, have become contemptible and heaps of ruine, for their oppoſing, oppreſſing and perſecuting God's Church. God's Love puts an higher eſtimate upon the pooreſt Saint, than upon all the Sinful, though ſceptred, crowned, adorned and adored, Monarchs of the world. Why did he ſmite the firſt-born in *Egypt* both of man and beaſt? why did he ſend his Tokens into the midſt of *Egypt* upon *Pharoah* and upon all his Servants? Why did he ſmite great Nations, and ſlay mighty Kings? *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, and *Og* King of *Baſhan*, and all the Kings of *Canaan*? *Pſal.* 135. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Was it not becauſe he had choſen Jacob unto himſelf, and Iſrael for his peculiar treaſure?* ver. 4. And again, *I gave* Egypt *for thy ranſom*, Ethiopia *and* Sheba *for thee. Since thou haſt been precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give men for thee, and people for thy life*, Iſa. 43. 3, 4. God in his Love thinks

thinks nothing too good, nothing too great to be done for his Church and People. He not only gives famous Kings and potent Nations up to ruine for his Peoples temporal deliverance; but in the ſtupendiouſneſs of his Love, hath given his Son for their eternal Salvation; *John* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; and in and by him hath made a full, compleat, and abundant proviſion, all things needful for your Salvation: *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Rom. 8. 32. The faithful apprehenſion and application of this Love, will ſteel you againſt all ſufferings, and make you Reproach-proof, and Perſecution-proof; that you ſhall not be aſhamed of a deſpiſed Goſpel, a reproached Religion, and a perſecuted Chriſt: and, *Hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the Love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts*, Rom. 5. 5. This Love will comfort you againſt all temptations concerning ſin, in doubtings concerning Gods preſence, perſeverance in Faith, and aſſurance of Salvation. *I am perſwaded*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, Rom. 8. 38, 39. To theſe add the dearneſs, ſtrength, conſtancy, and inviolableneſs of God's Love unto his Children; dearer than a mothers to her ſweeteſt babe, *Iſa.* 49. 15. ſtronger than the mountains, *Iſa.* 54. 10. more conſtant than the courſes of Heaven, *Jer.* 31. 35, 36. & 33. 20, 21. it is as ſure as God himſelf is ſure, *Pſal.* 89. 34, 35. And for a People to be ſubmitted to ſuch a Love, is ground of ſecurity and comfort. When Miniſters are taken from you, this will abide with you.

2. *To*

2. *To commit you to God, is to commit you to the tenderest mercy.* Mercy is the best refuge to the miserable. Whither shall the malefactor flee for pardon, but to the mercy of his Prince? whither shall the captive go for safety, but to the mercy of his Conqueror? The pity of an armed Conqueror is better safety than the flinty-heartednes of a naked captive. Compassion unarms the Armed, blunts sharpened swords, enfeebles the strong and sinewy arms, when an asiorgy arms the unarmed, sharpens the sword, addes strength to weak arms, and blocks up all wayes and means of securiey and comfort. A man's pity subdues him, when the valour, policy, strength and weapons of his enemies cannot conquer him, and makes him a security to his adversary. This encouraged *Benhadad* to humble himself to *Ahab*, whom, and his Kingdom, he had twice before attempted to destroy by two formidable Armies: *Behold, we have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful Kings; let us, we pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes on our heads, and go out to the King of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life:* and it was so, 1 *Kings* 20. 31, &c. And shall the Kings of *Israel* have mercy to save their enemies, and shall not the KING of the Kings of *Israel* have mercy on his Children? Mercy makes the tender heart partaker of the misery of him that is distressed. *Misericordia quasi miseria cordis*, it translates the misery of another into the heart of the merciful, and enclines them to relieve and succour them. It is pity that makes you to bind up the wounds of the wounded, to wash *Lazarus* his sores, to cloath the naked, to feed the hungry, to refresh the thirsty. Now the God to whom I leave you, is the God of pity and Father of mercies, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. all the pity and compassion in the creatures, is derived from him; and were it all contracted into one, yet it were but a

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drop to his Ocean: and as the mercifulneſs of tender Parents, cauſeth them to pitty their ſick Children; ſo God, like a tender Father, *pitties them that fear him*, Pſal. 103. 10. yea, he ſympathizeth with them in all their ſufferings, accounting their ſufferings his: Are they reproached? ſo is he; are they perſecuted? ſo is he; are they impriſoned, baniſhed, tormented, put to cruel deaths? he accounts it as done to himſelf; and whatſoever Satan doth to you, in tempting you to ſin, to diſpair, in buffeting you, filling your hearts with heavineſs, your mouths with ſighs and complaints, your eyes with ſhowers of tears, he takes it as done to himſelf: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, Iſa. 63. 9. And as, παθὴ ματὰ εἰσιν μαθήματα, we from our own ſuffering, learn more to pitty others in the like diſtreſſe; ſo Chriſt's experiences of the worlds hatred and perſecution, of Satans rage and temptation, doth cauſe Chriſt to pitty his ſuffering Members more: *We have not an high Prieſt that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted as we are, yet without ſin; and in that himſelf ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted*, Heb. 4. 15. chap. 2. 18. Here is a riſe of Compaſſion according to the degree of ſuffering. How do the ſcreechings of a ſick Child, the deep ſighs and groans of a ſick tormented Child, make the bowels of the Parents roul within them, and melt their affections into tears. The Harlot, whoſe the living Child was, could not endure to ſuffer and ſee her Babe to be cut aſunder, but denied and acquitted her intereſt in him, *becauſe her bowels yearned towards him*, 1 Kings 3. 26. God's Pitty to his People, is the moſt intenſive, when their Afflictions are the moſt increaſed: *His ſoul was grieved for the Miſery of his People Iſrael*, Judg. 10. 16. It grieves God to ſee his lie laden with Iron-fetters, to

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lye in long, and loathſome Impriſonments, under cruel Tortures and Tormenting Deaths. When you are buffeted with Satan, bewailing your ſins and miſeries, God's Bowels of Compaſſion are moved towards you, *Jer.* 31. 18, 19, 20. *Surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf*, thus, *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed*, &c. *After I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Thus *Ephraim* bemoaned himſelf, and God heard him, and marked his expreſſions, weighed the ſorrow and burden of his ſpirit, and pittieth him; *Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleaſant Child? Since I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, and I will ſurely have mercy on him, ſaith the Lord.* And this tender compaſſion is not a bare pitty, but an helping, relieving, ſuccouring Pitty. Many have compaſſion, but want ability to help and ſuccour; others have ability to help, but want compaſſion: but God hath both Mercy to pitty, and Ability to help and ſave his People; and therefore we have frequently an Act of Deliverance joyned with an Act of Mercy. When *Hazael, King of Syria, oppreſſed Iſrael all the dayes of Jehoahaz, the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compaſſion on them, and would not deſtroy them*, 2 Kings 13. 22, 23. And the reaſon why God did not deſtroy the Jews in the Wilderneſs, was becauſe of his Mercy; *But he being full of Compaſſion, forgave their Iniquity, deſtroyed them not*, Pſal. 78. 38. Mercy ſteps in and pleades, prevailingly againſt Juſtice, for the preſervation of a People: And this Compaſſion of God, God's People have pleaded with him for deliverance; *Look down from Heaven and behold, from the Habitation of thy Holineſs, and of thy Glory. Where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, the ſounding of thy Bowels and Mercies*

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towards me? are they restrained? O Lord, thou art our Father, and our Redeemer, Isa. 63. 15, 16. This Mercy is a sin-pardoning-Mercy.

And this will be a refuge to fly unto, when ye are pursued by an accusing, condemning Conscience for sin committed: this is a Cordial of greater comfort, than sin a cause of sorrow; a Plaister of a larger proportion, than the wounds of sin upon your Conscience; it as far excells thy Scarlet-dyed sins, as the distance is betwixt East and West: *As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*, Psal. 103. 12. compared to the height of heaven above the earth; *As the Heaven is high above the Earth, so great is Mercy to them that fear Him*, Psal. 103. 11. And again, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my wayes as your wayes; for as the Heaven is higher than the Earth, so are my Wayes higher than your wayes, and my Thoughts than your thoughts; and therefore he will abundantly pardon*, Isa. 55. 7, 8, 9. Compared to a Sea that can swallow and cover Mountains as well as mole-hills, *Mic.* 7. 19. This Sea of Mercy covered *Noahs* Drunkenness, *Lots* Incest, *Davids* Adultery and Murder, *Mary Magdalens* Whoredom, *Peters* Denial of Christ, and *Pauls* Persecution! and covers the mountains and multitudes of sins of all God's People, in all ages of the world; and will be a Refuge for your security against the guilt of sin, if you flee unto it: this is a Refuge to secure you against the violence of the proud, *Psal.* 86. 14, 15, 16. This is a Mercy so lasting, that is everlasting: *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord*, Isa. 54. 7, 8, 9, 10. Christ is so merciful a Shepherd, as in the dayes of his flesh he had compassion on the multitude, because they were sheep without a Shepherd; and now he sits upon

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the Throne of Glory; he hath not laid this tenderneſs to his Church aſide, but will either provide freſh ſupplies, or ſupport and preſerve his People under want of ordinary means, by an extraordinary manner. And to this Mercy I commend you, that, as a ſhield, will defend you from the Curſes, Divinations, Inchantments, Anathema's of your enemies; that will deſtroy your Perſecutors; pitty you under all your preſſures, redeem you from your miſeries, ſecure you againſt the guilt of ſin committed, and provide for your want, and relieve you by ſome ordinary or extraordinary way.

3. This is to commit you to the greateſt fidelity. They that will defend and ſecure others, muſt be faithful as well as merciful: *Faithleſs defenders, are worſe than open purſuers*; they rob us of the ſafety we expected, and expoſe us to the danger we leaſt feared. *Jaels* peace was *Siſera's* death. And how often did faithleſs *Dalilah* attempt to betray *Sampſon* to the *Philiſtines*, *Judg.* 16. And *David* muſt not lodge in *Keilah*, becauſe the Inhabitants would deliver him up, 1. *Sam.* 23. 11, 12. *Ahabs* Children loſt their heads by the unfaithfulneſs of their Guardians, 2 *King.* 10. How many famous and ſtrong Caſtles, well-fenced Towns, and formidable Armies, have been deſtroyed by the treachery of faithleſs Guards & Commanders? Open fields have more ſecurity with Faithfulneſs, than the ſtrongeſt walls with Treachery. Nothing ſafe committed to the cuſtody of faithleſs perſons; *Orphans* wronged and defrauded, your Eſtates imbezeled, your Perſons betrayed, your Lives exceedingly endangered; and what comfort or ſecurity can there be in ſuch Guardians or Protectors? But to be committed to ſuch Keepers, whom Favour cannot win, nor Preferments corrupt, nor Rewards bribe, nor Fear, nor Threatening, nor Dangers diſcourage, but remain reſolute and faithful

faithful againſt all, is great Security and Comfort. And ſuch an one is God : He is the faithful God; faithful to make good his Promiſes; faithful to preſerve whatſoever is committed to him. The Apoſtle would not have committed the Miniſters, the Affairs and Concernment of the Church of *Epheſus*, to God, if he had not been a *faithful God*. Chriſt when he dyed, ſaid, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.* And *Peter* exhorts the afflicted Chriſtians in his dayes, *to commit their ſouls unto God, as unto a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. And how many Martyrs, when they have become whole burnt-offerings to God, have given their ſouls in charge to God, *Father into thy Hands I commit my ſpirit:* whatſoever is laid up in the hands of God, is ſafe and ſecure; He cannot be bribed by Promiſes, Rewards, or any other way, to ſurrender any thing that is committed to his cuſtody : He is faithful to the leaſt Beaſt of our Herds, to the leaſt hair on your heads, *Luke* 21. 18. And if he be faithful in the leaſt, he will not be unfaithful in the greateſt: He is faithful to keep your perſons in dangers, not to give you up to the rage and ruine of your enemies ; *The Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth ; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his Enemies*, Pſal. 41. 2. And *David* prayes, that God would ſecure him againſt falſe Accuſers ; *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies : for falſe witneſſes are riſen up againſt me*, Pſal. 27. 12. He is faithful to preſerve you from Temptation ; He binds up Satan that he cannot tempt you when he would ; and when he gives Satan leave to tempt, yet God will be your refuge in the temptation : *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear, but with the temptation, will find out a way for your deliverance*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. Thus he prayed that *Peters* faith

faith failed not, *Luke* 22. 31. his Grace was ſufficient for *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. he is faithful to preſerve your Graces, your Knowledge, Faith, Love, Hope, Patience, Humility, &c. if God did not keep them they would ſoon wither, decay, and come to nothing; Satan would ſoon rob you of them, ſin would ſoon waſt and deſtroy them; but he will not loſe the leaſt duſt of this Gold; He is faithful to preſerve your Joy, and Peace of conſcience. Our Comforts have need of his protection as well as our Graces. How ſoon would temptations, ſin, and perſecution blow our Comforts away, if not preſerved by him. *In the world yee ſhall have tribulation, but in me ye ſhall have peace*, John 16. 33. *Your heart ſhall rejoyce, and your joy ſhall no man take from you*, ver. 22. Neither reproaches, nor impriſonments, nor perſecutions ſhal quench your joy, for he can make you ſing in priſons, and rejoyce in tribulation for his Name, *Acts* 16. *Rom* 5. And though your Graces be weakened, and your Comforts eclipſed, yet he will revive and ſtrengthen your Graces, he will reſtore your Comforts: Though he caſt down, yet he is faithful, he will not caſt off: though he may ſuffer your bodies to be impriſoned, baniſhed, tortured, burned, yet he is faithful to keep them ſafe until the Reſurrection, the great and general Spring, when they ſhall be raiſed, and reunited to your ſouls, and reflouriſh in a glorified manner to eternity: And here is great ſecurity concerning temporal danger, temptation, Graces, Comforts, and all. To which I commend you, and your All for Protection and Comfort.

4. *This is to commit you to the greateſt care and diligence.* Diligence is as neceſſary in thoſe that will ſecure and protect others, as well as Mercy and Faithfulneſs. Sleepy Guards and Watchmen, betray ſtrong

Caſtles and fortified Gariſons, as well as unfaithful Guards: The men of *Laiſh* were a ſecure and negligent People, and the men of *Dan* took their City, and deſtroyed them with the edge of the Sword, *Judg.* 18. Whilſt *Abner* and the Army ſlept, *Abiſha* would have ſlain *Saul* their King, if *David* would have permitted him, 1 *Sam.* 26. 11, 12. How many famous and formidable Armies have been utterly routed, and thouſands of men ſlain by an handful of people through careleſneſs and negligence? better is a weak defence with care and diligence, than a ſtrong fortified place with negligence. But Jeſus Chriſt is very diligent and watchful for the preſervation of his Church and People; even as the diligent Keeper of a Vineyard alwayes watcheth, that none ſpoil his Vineyard, that wild beaſts break not in and ſpoil it, ſo God watcheth and defendeth his Church, *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, leſt any hurt it; I will keep it night and day*, Iſa. 27. 3. He knows all the plots and contrivances of ungodly men, againſt his Church; *Why do the Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing; and the Kings of the Earth take counſel together againſt the Lord and his Anointed?* Pſal. 2. 1, 2. He knew all the devices of *Senacherib* againſt *Jeruſalem*; *I know* (ſaith God) *thy abode, thy comming in, thy going out, and thy rage againſt me*, Iſa. 37. 28. Many are the devices of wicked men againſt God's Children, and they know them not; but God knows them, when they are in their deep conſultations, God's eye is upon them, he ſtands by and hears them: God knows the confederacy of *Syria* and *Ephraim* againſt *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, to take it, and ſet up a King for themſelves, *Iſa.* 7. 5, 6. He knew the bloody deſign of *Herod* againſt Chriſt, notwithſtanding his pretence of worſhipping him. He ſaw the deſperate Popiſh Gun-

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Powder Plot here in *England*; God is very diligent to know all the designs of his Churches enemies; *He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep*, Psa. 121. 3, 4. Though the enemies of the Church are vigilent, politick, and strong, yet the Defender of the Church is more vigilent, more politick, more strong, he opposeth his Wisdom to their wisdom, his Counsels to their counsels, his Power to their power, he out-wits them, and out-powers them: *He bringeth the counsel of the Heathen to nought, and makes the devices of the People of none effect*, Psal. 33. 10. *He taketh the wise in their craftiness, he maketh them to fall into the same Snare they have laid, and into the same Pit they have digged for others*, Psal. 7. 15, 16. He hangs *Haman* on the same Gallows he had raised for *Mordecai*. And as he is diligent to discover the plots of his Peoples enemies, so he is diligent to defend his People, even as the Governour of a besieged Garison, is diligent to look to every place, and bring fresh aid, and new supply where there is most need; he encourages them that are fainting, saves them that are in danger, his care and diligence is a great security and comfort: So God is every where with his People, diligent to save them, to refresh, to strengthen them. He is with his *Josephs* in Prison, with his *Jobs* on the Dunghil, with his *Daniels* in the Lions-Den, with the three Children in the fiery Fornace: Are they imprisoned, banished, sick, persecuted, in great dangers? God is careful to save them: *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro upon the whole Earth, to shew himself Mighty on the behalf of them that fear his Name*, 2 Chron. 16. 9. He is diligent to preserve the souls, as well as the bodies of his People, from Satans temptations, the allurements of the world, and inward corruptions; and though he suffers them to be tempted, yet *he* is with them,

and *will not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear*: He is diligent to preſerve the Graces of his People, even as the Goldſmith is careful and diligent to keep and ſave all the filings and duſt of his Gold, becauſe the leaſt grain of it, according to its proportion is precious; ſo the leaſt of your Graces, though weak and ſmall in your account, is precious, and of great worth in the account of God, and he will not ſuffer the leaſt to decay; *He will not break a bruiſed reed, nor quench ſmoaking flax.* God's People are very precious in his eſteem, they are his *Jewels*, Mal. 3. as dear to him as *the apple of his eye*, Zeph. 2. As a man when his houſe is on fire, is wonderful diligent to keep and ſave from the flame, whatſoever is dear and precious to him, his Wife and Children, his Silver and Gold, and his Jewels: So when the World, or a Nation is on a flame, God is wonderfully careful to preſerve his People, that are his *Jewels*, his *Spouſe*, his *Children*, they are dear to him. Are you afraid that the Furnace will be heated too hot, that the Temptation will be too ſtrong, or the burden of Afflictions too great to bear? Let this be your comfort, he is your Security; and will proportion afflictions to your ſtrength, or give ſtrength proportionable to the burden: And if he give ſtrength to bear a burden, it is as if he laid no burden at all upon you: he will be careful that the Fornace be not too hot, nor the Temptation too ſtrong, nor the Burden too weighty; the good Shepherd is wonderfully careful of every Sheep in his flock, and when the Lambs cannot go he will carry them, he will not over-pace the Ewes with young, but in his diligence and care will accommodate his journeys, his drivings, to the weakeſt and tendereſt in the flock. So Jeſus Chriſt the great Shepherd of his Church, will not only feed his Flock, but be careful,

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that neither Devils nor wicked Men drive on Temptation, nor the ſtorm of Perſecution too furiouſly, but according to the ſtrength of the weakeſt: He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd. *He ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Boſome, and gently lead thoſe that are with young*, Iſa. 40. 11. Jeſus Chriſt is that *Eliakim*, *Iſa.* 22. 21, 22, &c. upon whom all the affairs and concernments of the Church in general, and all the concernments of every Soul in particular do depend, whether they be concerning the ſoul or body, temporal, or eternal, or all. And as he is faithful, ſo he is diligent to perform and keep all things committed to his charge; ſuch is his faithfulneſs and diligence that nothing ſhall miſcarry that is committed to him. And therefore, Be not diſtractively careful what ſhall become of you, who ſhall teach you, and how you ſhall be taught, but by Prayer and Supplication, *Caſt your care upon him, for He careth for you*, Phil. 4. 6.

5thly. *To commit you to God, is to commit you to Infinite Power to protect you, to ſupport you, and deliver you.* What is Power without Love and Compaſſion? and, What is Love and Tenderneſs without Faithfulneſs? What is Faithfulneſs without Diligence? and what is Diligence and Care without Power? Willingneſs to help without Ability? and, What is Ability without Love, Compaſſion and Willingneſs? theſe are unſafe ſecurity; but when all theſe are united together, they muſt needs make ſtrong Security and Defence, and ſolid grounds of Comfort—— Here then is an infinite Power.

1. *To defend the Church, and every Child of God in the greateſt dangers.* God's Church is that *Aijeleh Sahar*, the morning Stag, mentioned in the title and inſcription of *Pſal.* 22. As the Hunters early in the

morning ſingle out one Stag, or Deer, from the whole herd to chaſe and purſue all the day, ſo all the Devils in Hell, and all the wicked men of the world, ſingle out the People of God to chaſe and perſecute with fury and rage, ſo long as they are in the world: She is ſurrounded with great dangers; and She is ſecured with ſtrong Power. A man when he is beſieged by a potent, politick and cruel enemie, in a Caſtle whoſe foundations cannot be undermined, whoſe walls cannot be battered down, nor ſcaled, whoſe gates cannot be broken, nor burnt, whoſe proviſion inexhauſtable, and all within faithful and truſty; he needs not fear the thundrings of the Cannons, the roarings of great *Granados*, the glittering Swords, nor bloody Flags of his Enemy: So though the gates of Hell, all the policy and power of infernal furies are united againſt God's People, yet they ſhall not prevail, there is more with than againſt them; our God, even this God to whom I commend you, is ſecurity enough to defend them. He is compared to a Rock, which all the Devils in Hell cannot undermine, 2 *Sam.* 22. 2, 3, 4. *Mat.* 16. 18. Compared to a Tower, whoſe walls can never be beaten down, *Prov.* 18. 10. *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower, and the Righteous flie thereunto and are ſafe.* Compared to a Shield that cannot be pierced, *Pſal.* 28. 7. and 33. 20. To great Waters, that no Ship nor Boat with oars can paſs, *Iſa.* 33. 21. Compared to a Wall, not of ſtone, which may be battered down, or time waſte and conſume, but to a Wall of *Braſs*, *Jer.* 15. 20. yea, *a Wall of fire*, Zech. 2. 5. Other walls may be approached unto, ſcaled, but a Wall of fire cannot be ſcaled, nor touched, it terrifies the enemies at a diſtance. All theſe ſhew God's infinite Power to defend his People. He is a Munition of Rocks to defend his People,

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that can neither be undermined, nor battered; ſo high, that they cannot be ſcaled; he is ſuch ſupplys of proviſion, that they cannot be famiſhed forth. *Iſa.* 33. 16. *He ſhall dwell on high, and his place of defence ſhall be the Munition of Rocks; his bread ſhall be given him, and his water ſhall be ſure.* Well then, let this comfort you, that you are incircled with ſo great a Power for protection.

2. *Here is infinite Power to ſupport your ſpirits under the greateſt trials, that they faint not.* It is a wonder to conſider the multitudes and mountains of afflictions heaped on the People of God, and they not diſcouraged; when liberty, riches, relations, and life lye at the ſtake, yet they faint not; ſurely this muſt needs come from a Divine Power, which is glorified in mans weakneſs, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. Would you not wonder to ſee a Torch, a Candle to burn in a mighty ſtorm and tempeſtious wind? Would you not wonder to ſee a ſpark of Fire to burn, and keep alive in the midſt of a Sea? So it is a wonder that theſe mighty ſtorms of Perſecution, and floods of Affliction that fall upon the Godly, ſhould not daunt and diſ-ſpirit them. God proportions his Joy to the Sufferings of his People, He can make them to account Priſons to be as Palaces, and Dungeons as places of delight; Ropes and Iron-Chains, to be more to them than Golden Ornaments. He will ſo ſupport your ſpirit under ſufferings, that you ſhall glory in Tribulation for him; *Rom.* 5. 5. *As the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in you, ſo the Conſolations of Chriſt ſhall abound to you,* 2 Cor. 1. 4, 5.

3. Here is infinite Power to deliver you from your greateſt fears and ſufferings; He hath done great things of old for his Church, and he is the ſame God ſtill, and will do great things for his Peoples deliverance: But of this by and by.

6thly. *To commit you to God, is to commit you to a Fountain of All Grace, for ſupply and preſervation of Grace.*

1. *Here is a fulneſs of the Grace of Gifts*: All the eminent Gifts of God's People have come from this Fountain, the gifts of Wiſdom and of Knowledge, the gift of Miracles, the gift of Prophecy, of diſcerning of Spirits, 1 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9, 10, 11. When you are called before Courts, the learned Fathers, and the Sons of the Church, to plead for, maintain and defend your Religion, he will give you Wiſdom, that your adverſaries ſhall not be able to reſiſt. He that ordaineth his praiſe from the mouths of Babes, and opened the mouth of *Balaams* Aſs, will teach you what to ſay, with ſuch Wiſdom that your enemies cannot gainſay. *Luke* 21. 15. The learned Rabbies among the *Jews* were not able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and the Spirit that was in *Stephen*, Acts 6. 10. *Apollos* was a man mighty in the Scriptures, and he mightily convinced the *Jews*, Acts 18. 24, 28. Do not therefore fear the weakneſs of your parts or learning, This God to whom I commit, both can and will make you baffle your learned adverſaries, as of old, if he ſee it good. But if he deny you ability to ſpeak for it, he will give you an heart, will, courage and ſtrength to ſuffer for the Truth.

2. *Here is a fulneſs of the Gifts of Grace.* Gifts without Grace may adorn us, but never ſanctifie and ſave us. Grace is of indiſpenſable neceſſity: no Grace here, no Glory hereafter. Holineſs is the Suburbs, Heaven is the City: and as we paſs through the Suburbs into the City, ſo through Grace we muſt paſs into Glory. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God. And without Holineſs no man can ſee the Lord.* Now here is a full and free Fountain, to furniſh you that want. All the glorified Saints in Hea-

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yen were once by nature as empty of Grace and Holineſs, as any of you now are; and from this Fountain they have been ſupplied: and God is the ſame ſtill in the freeneſs, fulneſs and willingneſs to communicate his Grace to every hungring and thirſting ſoul. There is nothing wanting but a ſpiritual ſence of your want of it, your miſery without it, and an earneſt deſire and endeavour after it. Such are invited, *Rev.*22.17. *The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come. And whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life.* God doth not only invite you, but earneſtly deſire that you would come. The full breaſts of the mother are in pain until they be drawn by her babe. And theſe full breaſts ſeem to be in pain until you come; and therefore God makes an open and general Proclamation, that every one that comes ſhould have a full and free ſupply. Here is a fulneſs of variety without price, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that is athirſt, come; come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without money and without price.* Here is a Fountain full, open and free to every thirſting ſoul: for the *Poor* as well as for the *Rich*; for the *Mean* as well as for the *Noble*; for the *Simple* as well as for the *Wiſe*. It is open and free to Parents and Children, to Maſters and Servants. Here is a fulneſs of variety and all kinds of Grace. *He is the God of all Grace*, 1 Pet.5.10. Here is Grace to enlighten your underſtandings; Grace, to bow and make obedient your ſtubborn wills; Grace, to ſoften your hard hearts, and make your benummed conſciences tender; Grace, to untie your tongues, and make the dumb to ſpeak for God, and to God, in prayers and praiſes to him. Here is Grace for every condition; for Liberty and Impriſonments; for Peace and Perſecution;

ſecution; for Sickneſs and Health: The fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and freeneſs of this Fountain, is not only ſecurity and comfort againſt your wants, but your weakneſs and decayes of Grace alſo. It may be many of you have, upon your ſerious retirements and contemplations of your ſpiritual eſtate, ſuch perplexing and diſponding thoughts as theſe; complaining, How ſhall my weak Graces be preſerved from periſhing in the midſt of ſo many and ſtrong corruptions within me! how can my weak Graces endure the terrible aſſaults and furious onſets of Satan! how can they hold out in theſe long temptations! how can I, a poor weak and bruiſed Reed, ſtand in tempeſtuous winds, when the talleſt Cedars in God's *Labanon* have been ſadly rent and broken! how can this ſmoaking flax but be wholly extinguiſhed, when ſo many bright flames have been quenched by the floods of afflictions! It is impoſſible that a ſpark of fire ſhould be kept alive in the midſt of a Sea. And how much more will it be thus with me, when for ought I know, I may want the publick Ordinances of God? from whence, as from an Armory, I was ſupplyed with Furniture and Armor againſt Temptations; from whence, as from a rich furniſhed Shop, I was ſupplied with Sovereign Cordials, to relieve and ſuccour my weak and fainting Graces! Can the babe live when the food is withheld, or ſuch given as is unſuitable, not nutritive! How ſhall I, a weak Babe in Chriſt, live, when I want the ſincere Milk of God's Word, or huſks given me inſtead of the bread of my Father's houſe! True it is, Sirs, that Grace in the midſt of many and ſtrong Corruptions within, and Temptations without, is like a ſpark of fire in the midſt of the Sea. And when the means of ſpiritual life and growth are removed, life and growth muſt decay: but what is impoſſible with men, is poſſible with God. He

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is a Fountain of Grace to ſupport and ſtrengthen your weakneſs, as well as to ſupply your wants. He that ſuffered the towering Cedars of his *Labanon* to be broken with mighty winds, can keep thy bruiſed Reed from being broken: He that ſuffered the bright flames of Love, and fervent Affection in others, in part and for a time to be cooled, can keep thy ſmoaking flax from being quenched: He that creates ſomething of nothing, that brings good out of evil, can and will preſerve thy weakeſt Graces in a Sea of corruption: he that preſerves the weakeſt Babes in Nature, will preſerve his ſmalleſt Babes in Grace: Yea, here is that God that will glorifie his Power in your weakneſs, and after ye have ſuffered a while, *make you perfect, ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, and ſettle you*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. You nor your Graces are not in your own keeping: they and you are kept *by the mighty Power of God to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. God is ſtronger than all, and no man, nor any thing, ſhall pull you, nor your Graces, out of his hand, *John* 10. 29, 30. This Grace will ſuſtain you in all your diſtreſſes, and make the Twelling *Jordan* and *Red Sea* of Affliction foordable, and carry you through. *He* will ſend ſupplies in every ſiege; and make his Grace ſufficient for us in all our buffetings: *He* will proportion his dealings to your ſtrength, or ſtrengthen your ſhoulders according to your burdens. Here is Grace to make the weak ſtrong, for ſtrong corruptions, ſtrong temptations, ſtrong difficulties; not only to encounter with them, but to conquer and ſubdue them. This Grace is *Armour of proof*, *Reproach-proof*, *Priſon-proof*, *Tribulation-proof*, *Death-proof*; this will make you to rejoyce in Tribulation, *that you are accounted worthy to ſuffer for the Name of* JESUS: In a word, it is a Fountain of Grace, both for ſupply and ſtrength, to bear your charges till you come to Glory.

7thly.

7thly. *To commit you to God for Comfort and Security, is to commit you to him, who ſtands in the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of all Relations to his Church and People.* Relations are of the ſmalleſt Entity, but of the greateſt Efficacy. The bowels of love, tenderneſs and affection of an Husband, a Wife, of Parents and Children, are of a great energy.

1. This is to commit you to the Captain of the Church. The Church is compared to an Army with Banners, and *Chriſt* is the Captain General of that Army, *John* 5. 13, 14. this Captain is wiſe and politick, to find out and diſappoint the cruel Stratagems and bloody Deſigns of his Churches Enemies, *Pſal.* 33. *He bringeth the Counſel of the Heathens to naught, and maketh the Devices of the People of none effect.* He is prudent in managing all the Affairs and Concernments of the Church, and orders them for his Peoples advantage; becauſe *He is Wonderful in Counſel, and Excellent in working*, Iſa. 28. 29. As the Captain of his Church, He goes before them in all their dangers; He abates the Fury of the Adverſary, he blunts the Sword; he will make way for his People to follow him through the greateſt difficulties: He ſtops the mouths of hungry Lyons; cooleth a Fiery-furnace; makes a *Jordan* and a red Sea, paſſable: He hath taſted of every cup; hath taken away the Poyſon of it, and makes it medicinal and ſweet in the iſſue: hence called, *The Leader and Commander of his People*, Iſa. 55. 4. As your Captain, he will ſuccour you with new ſupplies of Strength and Courage in all your combatings with Corruptions, Temptations, and Satan, and reſtore you when you are near vanquiſhed: *his Grace is ſufficient for you*, 2 Cor. 12. As your Captain, he encourageth you *by his Word*, *Iſa.* 41. 13, 14, 15. *Mat.* 10. 28. *Luke* 12. 32. *John* 14. 27. *Rev.* 2. 10. by his *Example*, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2, 3. by promiſe

miſe of *Reward*; that the Dunghil of your ſufferings through perſeverance and uprightneſs, ſhall be turned into a *Throne of Glory: Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, Rev. 3. 10. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me on my Throne, even as I overcame, and am ſate down with my Father on his Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. As our Captain, he conquers all our Eenemies, *Sin*, *Satan*, *the World*, and crowns us with *Victory*, Rom. 8. 37. *We are more than Conquerors through Chriſt that loved us.* And hence the Apoſtle triumphs; *O Death, were is thy Sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory! The ſting of Death is Sin, and the ſtrength of Sin is the Law: but thanks be to God that giveth us the Victory through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57.

2. He is the *King of his Church*, Pſal. 2. 6. called the *King of Saints*, Rev. 15. 3. ſtilled the *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 16. As King, he will effectually call you, and all others that belong to the Election of Grace, into a ſtate of Salvation: *Thy People ſhall be a willing People in the day of thy Power*, Pſal. 110. 3. He will redeem you from the *Thraldom* of *Sin*, and *Satans Vaſſalage*, turning *Darkneſs* to *Light*, from the *Power* of *Satan*, to the *Power* of *God*, *Acts* 26. 18. Kings are the Refuge of their diſtreſſed Subjects; like the Tree in *Nebuchadnezzars* Viſion, in whoſe *branches* the *Birds* builded their neſts, and under whoſe *ſhadows* the *Beaſts* reſted and ſecured themſelves, *Dan.* 4. 12. So God is the great Refuge of his Church, of his People; *Thy Name is a ſtrong Tower, and the Righteous fly thereunto, and are ſafe*, Prov. 18. 10. If you will be true Chriſtians, you muſt expect to meet with ſtormy and windy dayes within you, and by corruption, without you; by wicked men, and infernal Spirits expect to be perſecuted, purſued with temptations,

ſtun.

ſtung with ſin, and buffeted by Satan; but here is your *Refuge*, *Iſa.* 32. 2. *A man ſhall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the ſtorm, and the ſhadow of a great Rock in a weary Land.* This King of the the Church, is *glorious in Power, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders.* He is the Sole Soveraign of the three Kingdoms, *Heaven*, *Earth* and *Hell*, and governs all the Creatures therein, and diſpoſeth their actions according to his will. He ſtills the *raging Sea*, turning the *ſtorm* into a *calm*, and *limits* the *foaming* and *furious waves*; *ſo far ſhalt thou go, and no further.* He binds up the *four Angels at the River Euphrates*, and *looſeth* them at his *pleaſure*, and *limits* their *rage*; *i. e.* He binds up and looſeth and limits the *Turkiſh* Fury, for an hour, for a day, for a month, for a year, which like mighty Seas break out, and bear down before it mighty Nations and Kingdoms, drowning them in the Floods of hoſtile Invaſions and Miſeries, *Rev.* 9. 14, 15. This King binds up the Devil in the Chains of his Power and Providence, that he cannot tempt you, touch an hair of your head, nor a Swine of your herd, unleſs God give him leave; and if he give him leave, yet he limits for duration of time and meaſure, ſo that your enemies ſhall neither ſooner, nor longer, nor more afflict you, than God gives them leave. This King will ſubdue and conquer his Churches Enemies; *He will break them with a Rod of Iron, and daſh them in pieces like a Potters veſſel*, Pſal. 2. 9. He will ſtrike through Kings in the day of his wrath, *Pſal.* 110. they ſhall be before him as *Duſt before the Wind*, as *Briars*, *Thorns*, *Stubble before the Fire*, Iſa. 27. 4. This King is *wonderfully rich*, and multiplies great *Gifts* and *Priviledges* upon his Church and People. He is a *Sun* and *Shield*; *he will give Grace and Glory*; *and no good thing will he withhold from you if ye live uprightly*, Pſal. 84.

84.11,12. He will abundantly recompence all your works, losses, sufferings for him, with an *incorruptible Crown of Glory*, 1 Pet. 1.4. In a word, in the day of his glorious Royalty, when he comes to judge the World, he will wipe off all the soot and blackness of Reproach and Sufferings, and invest with an admirable Glory, shining like the *Sun* in the Firmament.

3. Jesus Christ is his Churches Shepherd, *Isa.* 40.11. *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd.* And God promiseth that he will *set one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even his servant David*; *i. e.* Christ of the Seed of *David*, *Ezek.* 34. 23. And Christ assureth us, that he is the *good Shepherd*, *John* 10. 11, 14, 16. What a Shepherd is to his Sheep, the same is Christ to his Church; he will provide Pasture for his People. *He maketh me*, saith *David*, *to lye down in green Pastures, and leads me beside the still Waters*, Psal. 23. These *green Pastures* and *still waters*, are Gospel Ordinances, where his People feed and drink: The variety of Ordinances, shew the variety of feeding: the richness and fulness of the Ordinances, shew the plentifulness of feeding. Here is Milk for Babes, Wine for the Faint, Water for the Scorched, strong Meat for strong Christians, *Isa.*55.1,2. He hath provided his Body and Blood to feast and feed you to Life Eternal: He knows the number of his Sheep, and their particular persons from other men, *John* 10. 14. *I am the good Shepherd, and know my Sheep. The Foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*, 2 Tim. 2.19. Though you be in Prisons, in Dungeons, in Banishments, though the wool be scratcht off, and the skin tore by Persecutions, yet he knows you, even you who are given him of the Father in his eternal Election, *John* 17.6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* Such of you as have his Image upon your

your ſouls, and his Fathers Name wrote upon your foreheads, *Rev.* 14. 1. ſuch of you as have the ſprinkling of his Blood, and are waſhed white in the Lambs Blood, *Rev.* 7. 14. Shepherds uſe to preſerve their Flock. *David* hazarded his Life to preſerve the Flock *from the roaring Lyon and revenous Bear*, 1 Sam. 17. 34. Shepherds watch night & day to preſerve their Flocks; as *Jacob*, *Gen.* 31. 40. and the Shepherds to whom Chriſt's Birth was preached, *Luke* 2. 8. Jeſus Chriſt is that careful Shepherd, who defends his from them that would deſtroy them: the Devil was never yet able to get the leaſt Lamb of his Flock; *Thoſe that thou haſt given me, I have kept, and none is loſt but the Son of Perdition*, John 17. 12. and never ſhall the Devil be able to get any of Chriſt's Sheep, *John* 10. 29. my Father is greater than all, and none ſhall be able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand. This Shepherd will heal you of all your ſpiritual Maladies and Diſeaſes: He is the great Phyſician of Souls; in the dayes of his fleſh he healed all that came, or were brought to him: He made the *Blind to ſee*, the *Deaf to hear*, the *Lame to walk*, the *Dumb to ſpeak*; He *cleanſed Lepers*, *raiſed the Dead*, and *caſt out the Devils*, *Mat.* 11. 4, 5. And He is the ſame for the ſoul; no diſeaſe to great for him to cure: He heals us of the Guilt of Sin, by Pardon and Juſtification. Thus He healed *Noah* of his Drunkenneſs, *Lot* of his Inceſt, *David* of his Adultery and Murder, *Solomon* of his Idolatry, *Peter* of his Denial, *Mary Magdalen* of her Whoredoms, *Paul* of his Perſecution: He heals us of the filth and dominion of Sin, by Sanctification. The God of Peace ſanctifie you throughout in ſpirit, body and ſoul. He enlivens and raiſeth them that are *dead*, enlightens them that are *blind*, ſoftens them that are *heard*, cleanſeth the *unclean*, making a *dunghil of*

ſin,

sin, a Temple of his Spirit; and the ſouls that are conſtituted Adultereſſes to Sin and Satan, a Spouſe to himſelf: He is anointed to *bind up the broken in heart, to proclaim Liberty to the captives, to open the Priſon-doors to them that are bound. He gives Beauty for Aſhes, and the Garment of Praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs, Iſa.* 61.1,2. This Shepherd will gather his Sheep together; his *Gentile* Sheep ſcattered, and *Jewiſh* Sheep diſperſed, both theſe he will gather: The *Gentiles, John* 10.16. the *Jews* alſo. One end of the Miniſtry is to gather in all the Elect into a ſtate of Grace out of the ſtate of Nature: and one end of the Miniſtry and Diſcipline is to gather in all that have ſtrayed, or been ſcattered ſince their converſion: He will gather all that have been ſcattered by Storms and Dogs, all that have been devoured, all that have dyed in Priſons, Dungeons, Baniſhments, in loathſome and unknown places; the *Sea ſhall give up her dead*, and the *Grave give up her dead*, and ſhall ſeparate them from the Goats, and lead and conduct them ſafely into the Folds of Heaven and Glory.

4. This is to commit you to the Father of the Church, who hath begotten his People unto himſelf by the *Immortal Seed of his Word*, Joh. 1.11,12, Jam. 1.18. who loves, delights in, pitties, provides for and defends his People, even as a Father loves, delights in, pitties, and provides for, and defends his Children.

5. This is to commit you to God, the Husband of his Church and People; who hath choſen them out of the maſs of mankind, and eſpouſed them unto himſelf, *Hoſ.* 2.19,20. and made one with them according to the antient Law of Marriage, *And they two ſhall be one fleſh, Epheſ.* 5.30,31. and dwells with his People in every place and condition; *Heb.* 13. *I will never leave*

thee nor forſake thee: He partakes of our humane nature, and makes his People partakers of the Divine Nature, 2 *Pet.* 1.4. As your Husband, he ſympathiſeth with you in all your ſufferings, accounting your afflictions his, *Iſa.* 63.9. As your Husband, he derives upon him all your ſins, *Iſa.* 53. 5. 2 *Cor.* 5. *ult.* The wife is not ſuiable at Law, but the husband. Jeſus Chriſt is the Husband of you that are Believers, he anſwers and non-ſuits all Bills of Indictments put up againſt you: *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus,* Rom. 8. 1. And as he takes your ſins upon himſelf, ſo he communicates to you the Riches and Priviledges, Purchaſes of his Grace and Sufferings here; *The Glory that thou haſt given me, I have given them, Joh.* 17.22. *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within, Pſal.* 45. And he will communicate to you the Greatneſs of his Glory and Bleſſedneſs hereafter, *Joh.* 17.22. *Father, I will that they whom thou haſt given me, be where I am, that they may behold the Glory thou haſt given me.* Here Chriſt doth win and contract his People, by his Ambaſſadours; but at the great Day of his glorious Royalty, when he ſhall be attended upon with a glorious Retinue of bleſſed Angels, he will publickly ſolemnize the Marriage betwixt himſelf and his People: Here they are in a Pilgrimage, then they ſhall be brought into the Brides Chamber: here you have a Crown of Grace, then he will put upon you a Crown of Glory. Now if you faithfully conſider, that God to whom I commit you, is the Fulneſs, Sweetneſs of all theſe Relations to you that are his People, the moſt potent, politick, victorious Captain; the moſt powerful, wiſe and rich King; the moſt diligent and skilful Shepherd; the tendereſt Father, and moſt loving Husband to his Church and People; it muſt needs be ground of Security and Comfort, in this your left and deſolate condition.

Eightly,

Eighthly, This is to commit you to that God who works wonderous things for the deliverance of his Church and People, *Exod.* 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in Holineſs, fearfull in Praiſes, doing Wonders!*

1. He is wonderful in diſappointing the great plots and deſperate counſels of his Churches enemies. *He bringeth the counſel of the Heathen to nought, he maketh the devices of the People of none effect*, Pſal. 33. 10. *Syria* and *Ephraim* had combined and plotted together, to take *Jeruſalem*, and ſet up a King for themſelves, but God ſaid, *It ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs*, Iſa. 7. 4, 5, 6, 7. How wonderful was he in diſappointing *Hamans* bloody deſign, when the Order for the deſtruction of the *Jews* was procured, ſigned and ſent by Poſts in the Provinces of the King, and the day appointed for ſlaughter drew nigh, and the *Jews* a weak unarmed captivated People, had no Power to ſave themſelves, and few Friends in the Court; then the High-Court of Heaven appears their Friend, and the Lord of Hoſts their refuge, and ſaves them: But how? Not by an Army, nor by an Angel, but by breaking the Kings ſleep: and that the time might not be tedious, the Books of their Chronicles muſt be read; and God ſo ordered, that they read how *Mordecai* the *Jew* had ſaved the King from the Treaſon of *Bigthana* and *Tereſh*, two Chamberlains, which was the beginning of their delivery, *Eſth.* 6. How wonderfull was the diſcovery of, and delivery from the Powder-plot? how near was it to have effected the great deſign? how unlikely to have been diſcovered and prevented, if God had not diſappointed it? He is wonderful in changing the very order and nature of the Creatures, that Fire ſhall not burn you, nor

hungry Lions devour, nor Waters drown you.

2. He is wonderful in working deliverance by ſmall means, and the greater the things done by ſmall means, the greater is the Wonder. *How* did he overthrow *Zerah* the *Ethiopian*, leading an Army of a thouſand thouſand, by an handful of men? 2 *Chr.* 14. 11. The formidable Army of the *Amalakites*, by *Gideons* three hundred, *Judg.* 7. By *Deborah* and *Barak*, and *Cyrus*, weak inſtruments, he delivered his People from great thraldom. *He* can arm the ſmalleſt creatures, Frogs, Lice, the duſt of the Earth, the aſhes of a Furnace, with ſtrength, to plague his Churches enemies. *He* can make *Iſrael* a worm, and poor, weak, contemptible People, to beat Mountains into duſt, that is, deſtroy Nations and Kingdoms, and Oppreſſors, that ſeem great, immovable and impregnable Mountains, *Iſa.* 41. Infinite Wiſdom and Power knows no difference betwixt the ſmalleſt and ſtrongeſt inſtruments.

3. Wonderful in delivering his People without means: What he doth by means, he can do without means, he can create means, when there is none. When *Hezekiah* complained, *The Children are come to the birth, but there is no power to bring forth.* God ſent an Angel, *and in one night ſlew an hundred fourſcore and four thouſand of the Syrian Army*, 2 Kings 19. 35. He ſmote *Herod that he was devoured with worms*, Acts 12. 23. and *Julian the Apoſtate with an Arrow from Heaven.* He can ſmite his Churches enemies with diviſions, and make them deſtroy each other, as the *Ammonites, Moabites and inhabitants of Mount-Seir*, when they came againſt *Jeruſalem*, in the dayes of *Jehoſaphet*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 22, 23. And how wonderful will God be, when he ſhall raiſe up his ſlain Witneſſes, as men out of the grave: *And make new Heavens, and a new*

new Earth, giving his Perſecuted Church, great Peace and Tranquility!

4. *He* is wonderful in turning the devices of the Churches enemies upon themſelves, that catcheth them in the ſame Snare they have laid, and maketh them fall into the Ditch they digged for others; *He returns their miſchief upon their own heads, and their violent dealings upon their own pates*, Pſal. 7. 15, 16. *He* hanged *Haman* on the ſame Gallows he reared for *Mordecai*. And caſt *Daniels* accuſers into the Lions Den, all whoſe bones were broken in peices before they came to the bottom of the Den: when he brought *Daniel* forth having no hurt upon him, *Dan.* 6.

I have done with the Doctrinal part of the firſt Branch for your *Security and Comfort*, to wit, God.

A word or two for *Application*, and then to the ſecond Branch.

If God be the beſt Security and Comfort a departing Miniſter can commit his People unto; Be perſwaded.

1. *To get an intereſt in this God.* It is of ſmall or no advantage to hear that God is ſuch Security and Comfort to his People in their loweſt conditions, and ſharpeſt afflictions, unleſs you have intereſt in him, in his Love to delight in you, in his Mercy to pitty you in all your miſeries; in his Diligence and Faithfulneſs to keep you; in his Power to ſave and defend you in dangers; in the fulneſs of his Grace to ſupply your wants in him, as the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of all relations to you; your Captain, your King, your Shepherd, your Father, your *H*usband. It is no relief nor comfort to a naked, hungry and thirſty man, to hear there are fine Cloaths, dainty Food, ſweet and rich Wine in ſuch and ſuch places; if he hath no propriety in them, he may periſh in his want for all theſe. So

though God is ſuch Sovereign Security and Comfort to his People, yet you may periſh that have no intereſt in him. Propriety in God is ground of your comfort and ſecurity: If you would have him to be your Captain, you muſt be his Soldiers, to fight his Battels againſt Sin and Satan. If you would have him to be your King, you muſt become his loyal Subjects to obey his Laws. If you would have him to be your Shepherd, your Father, your *Husband*, you muſt be his Sheep, not Goats; his Children, not Baſtards; his Spouſe, not Adultereſs: God muſt have a propriety by Grace in you, before you can have a propriety of Security and Comfort in him.

2. *Labour to improve your intereſt in God.* An intereſt in God, known and improved, is the beſt way and means to ſupport and comfort the ſoul under ſufferings, *Lam.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul, therefore will I hope in him.* There is light in the Sun to direct us, vertue in Meat and Drink to nouriſh us, in Cloaths to warm us, in Phyſick to heal us, in Cordials to ſtrengthen us: but if we ſhut our eyes againſt the Sun, it is to us as if there were no Sun at all; Meat and Drink nouriſh not unleſs we feed on them; Cloaths do not warm us unleſs we put them on: Phyſick doth not cure us, unleſs we drink it. So though there is enough in God for your ſecurity and comfort, yet unleſs you improve your intereſt in God, you will have ſmall comfort from him. Therefore exerciſe your Faith much upon his Promiſes, his Attributes, upon his Dealings with his Church of old, upon your own Experiences; and draw ſtrength and ſupplies of Grace from them. Be frequent in fervent Prayer to God, for your ſelves, for the ſlain Miniſtry, your Miniſter in particular, and for theſe Nations; *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love her.*

ther. See a ſuitableneſs and alſufficency in God for every condition you are in, and improve it, and you cannot want comfort in that condition. Time will not permit me to enlarge upon theſe, I hope the indiſpenſable neceſſiety of the former duty, and the incomparable benefit and advantage of this latter duty are ſufficent motives to ſtir you up to perform them.——

Now my Brethren, we uſually ſee when the Father of a Family dyes, he leaves and commits the protection of his Widow and Fatherleſs, the management of their affairs and concernments, to the prudence, and juſtice, to the love of his moſt faithful and truſty friends. And we ſee when *Paul* was no more to be at *Epheſus*, he commends them to God; and we read that Jeſus Chriſt a little before his death, made his laſt Will and Teſtament, and amongſt other things, he ſolemnly commended the tuition of his Seep to his Fathers care, intreating him by all the dearneſs betwixt them, that he would preſerve them from the Devil and all his evil deſigns againſt them, *John* 17. 11, 15. he had received them from the Father upon his commendation, ver. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*, and he had kept them ſafe while he was with them; *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them loſt, but the Son of Perdition*, ver. 12. And being now to go out of the world, intreats the Father that as he had kept them upon his commendation, ſo he would upon his recommendation undertake the protection, and tuition of them: *I Pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil*, ver. 15. and again, *Holy Father, keep through thine own Name, thoſe thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are one*, ver. 11. And now at my departure, according to theſe great Patterns worthy of imitation, *I commend you to God.*

When without my ſeeking for, I had the unanimous Invitation and general cheerful Reception of the whole Pariſh, I looked upon it as a demonſtration that God intended to intruſt me with your ſouls. And according to that ſmall Talent the Lord hath lent me, I have been willing and ready to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of your ſouls, and by ſoundneſs of Doctrine, unblamableneſs of Converſation to win you to Chriſt: and though I had no wheaten bread, yet rather than your ſouls ſhould ſtarve; according to the pattern of my great Lord and Maſter, I gave you barley bread, the nouriſhment and ſtrength of which I leave to your experiences. I did what I could while I was with you, to keep you, to fore-warn and fore-arm you; and now having no more time to be with you, I commend you and yours to the protection of the God of Grace and Peace. Whatſoever there is in an infinite God, that may make for your ſecurity and comfort, I commend you unto it; to his Mercy, to pity and pardon all your ſins; to his Righteouſneſs, to plead for you; to his Power, to defend you; to his Al-ſufficiency, to ſupply you: to all the virtue of his Arm; to all the affection of his Bowels; to all the depths of his Wiſdom, and to whatever elſe in an infinite God that can make for your defence, I commit you to it. From Him I received you; with him, with his Love, his Mercy, his Faithfulneſs, *&c.* I leave you——*To Him,*

1. Becauſe he is able to comfort you in all your ſorrows; who can and will ſhine upon you in the darkeſt nights, and turn them into a bright day. He is the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort; *And as the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in you, ſo your Conſolation ſhall abound by Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 5. he will give you an aſſured and impregnable Peace within, when you have all

Troubles

Troubles and War without. This was Christ's Legacy for his People; *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, let it not be afraid*, John 14.27. *Your heart shall rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you*, John 16.22. This peace shall so keep and defend your hearts, that all the beleaguering sufferings and afflictions shall not take nor vanquish them. *Phil.*4.7. And *the Peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts*; φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας, shall keep your hearts as in a strong, well-fortified, impregnable Garison.

2. To *Him I commend you, who is able to support under your greatest burdens.* Satan that great *Leviathan* would alwayes have more liberty to lay load upon load upon your backs, he would load you with temptations and persecutions without, he would have loads of corruptions and dissertions within, to be heaped upon you; he desires to winnow you, and try your strength: he would break your backs, dash your hopes, your comforts, your joy and peace, by accumulated miseries. But this God can and will make his Grace sufficient for you, and glorifie his Power in your weakness, 2 *Cor.* 12. When you are weakest in your selves, the Lord will shew himself strongest to you and for you, and make those burdens easie, which before appeared formidable and insupportable to you. *Rom.* 8. 26. Τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν, God will take up one end of the staff, and the heavieſt part of the burden upon himself.

3. *To him I commend you, who is able to establish you in the most shaking times.* Christians must not be as reeds, bow with every wind of Doctrine, nor moved away with every storm of Persecution, but they must be like those two brazen Pillars in *Solomons* Temple, called

called *Jachin* and *Boas*, Stability and Strength. You must be ſtrong & ſtedfaſt in the purity of the Doctrine, in the ſimplicity of the Worſhip of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Now you are not able to ſtand by your own ſtrength againſt ſtorms and winds, but God will ſtabliſh and ſtrengthen you, and make you like an houſe built upon the Rock, that all the waves and floods of Perſecution ſhall not be able to move you. *The God of all Grace after that you have ſuffered a while, will make you perfect, and ſtrengthen and ſettle you*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. You that are Chriſtians indeed are built upon ſuch a foundation, Jeſus Chriſt, as conveyes life, ſtrength, and ſtability to the ſuperſtructure. As broken bones, once knit, are the ſtronger; as trees ſhaken by the winds take deeper root: So God by all ſhakings and ſtormy winds will make you more ſtable and ſetled. It is your Security and my Comfort, you ſtand not by your own ſtrength, but by the Power of God.

4. *To Him I commend you, becauſe he is able to provide ſtrong and ſuitable ſupplies for you.* Should I commit you to men, they would ſeek their own profits, but never beſtow their pains; they would feed upon you, but not feed you; reap the fruit, but never watch, nor water, nor manure the Vineyard. But this God is the *great*, the *good* and *faithful Shepherd*, who when he removes one Inſtrument can raiſe another. When he takes away one Miniſter, he can provide you another; that can ſend you an *Eliſha* after *Elijah*; one to whom he hath given a double portion of his Spirit, 2 *Kings* 2. 9. a man of greater parts, learning and abilities, of greater experiences and skill in the great things of Chriſt, in the great concernments of your ſouls; both a *Boanarges* and a *Barnabas*.

5. *To Him I commend you, who is able to bleſs the ſmalleſt means, and make them equally profitable and beneficial*

as

as the beſt. Though in regard of men you may doubt of the former, yet in God you may be confident of the latter. All means are in God's hand. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that gives the increaſe.* His bleſſing upon the ſmalleſt means makes them very beneficial to you; when the want of this bleſſing makes the greateſt and moſt likely means inſuccesful: his bleſſing upon the Pulſe made *Daniel* and his Companions look freſher and fairer than thoſe that were fed at the Kings Table, *Dan.* 12. 3, 5. Barley loaves in Chriſt's hand, and with his bleſſing, is more beneficial than Wheaten Bread in the hands of man only, *John* 6. 9. This God by his bleſſing can make up the want of outward means. That is the beſt Faith that is got by the weakeſt means. You ſee poor children that are brought up with hard food, brown bread and water, to look fatter, ruddier, to be ſtronger than thoſe who are fed with dainties and varieties. God's bleſſing upon the weakeſt means makes fat and flouriſhing Chriſtians, when the want of his bleſſing upon the ſtrongeſt means makes many lean Chriſtians. He fed *Elijah* by the black Ravens, 1 *Kings* 17. 6.

6. *I commend you to this God, that can preſerve your Graces when outward means fail.* I told you he is a God of Wonders; what he doth by means, he can do without means: what he doth mediately by Inſtruments, he can do it immediately by Himſelf. Did not he ſuſtain *Moſes* without meat and drink forty dayes in the Mount? Did not he ſuſtain our bleſſed Saviour forty dayes without food in the Wilderneſs? Did not he provide for, and maintain the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs for the ſpace of forty years, without plowing and ſowing, by an extraordinary providence, ſo that they wanted not until they ate of the old Corn of the Land of *Canaan*? Did not he preſerve the Widow's Meal

Meal in the Barrel, and her Cruſe of Oyl, that they waſted and failed not, until God ſent rain upon the earth, 1 *King.* 17. 14, 15, 16. So if God bring upon you a Famine of the Preaching of the Word, yet God can, and will preſerve your Graces, they ſhall not waſte till God ſend ſupplies: Doth God bring you into a wilderneſs, where you have no Ordinances of God, God can and will provide ſupplies till your Grace ſhall be turned into Glory. He enabled the Prophet to travel in the ſtrength of the Cake, forty nights and dayes, until he came to the Mount of God, 1 *King.* 19. And *is the hand of the Lord ſhortned that he cannot help?* or are the bowels of his mercy ſhut up, that he will not? or is he more careful of the life of Nature, than of the Life of Grace? No! no! he is the ſame God ſtill, and he will enable you in the preſent ſtrength of Grace if you want Means, to travel on till you come to the bleſſed Mount of God.

7. To him I commend you, that can and will turn all to your good. He can overſhoot Men and Devils in their own bowes; what they deſign for your hurt and deſtruction, he can turn it to your great benefit; Even as the Apothecary kills the deſtructive nature of poyſonous Ingredients, and makes them medicinal; ſo God pulls out the Sting and Poyſon of every ſuffering and affliction, and makes them good. *Rom.* 8. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that are called according to his purpoſe.* Doth he ſuffer you to be under many and divers Afflictions? he exerciſeth you with divers Rods and Tryals, with Reproach, Blaſphemy, Sickneſs, Impriſonments, Poverty, Buffetings with Satan. God will bring good out of all theſe. Several Diſeaſes muſt have ſeveral Cures. And ſeveral Ingredients make up one Remedy to cure a Malady. It may be you have many Corruptions, and ſtrong

Corruptions,

Corruptions, therefore you must have strong and divers kinds of Cure; and by all this variety, God aims at your good, to wean and win you, to purge and kill sin in you, to prevent sin in the future. Every twig of the Rod, though bitter at the present, will at last drop Hony into your Souls; He will turn your water into Wine; your wandrings in the wilderness, shall end in Canaan; all his Dispensations to his People come in Love and Mercy; though Sickness, yet in Love and Mercy; though Poverty, yet in Love; though Affliction, yet in Love. A Cross in Love, is better than a Comfort in Wrath. Wicked men have a Curse in their best things, a Curse in their Honours, a Curse in their Riches, a Curse in their Health. God's People have a Blessing in their worse things; a Blessing in Poverty, a Blessing in Sufferings, a Blessing in Affliction: and God's Love sweetens our sowrest Draughts, when his Curse imbittereth and poysoneth the sweetest Enjoyments. This God will sanctifie all Providences to you: and sanctified Sickness is better than unsanctified health. Sanctified Poverty is better than unsanctified riches. Sanctified Afflictions are Blessings and Mercies, and better than unsanctified prosperity.

I have done with the first part of the Remedy, your Security and Comfort in your desolate condition. I now come to the second part of the Remedy; that is, *The Word of his Grace*. Before I come to prove it, give me leave to shew you, why it is called *Grace*, or give you the Reasons of the title *Grace*, given to the *Word*; *The Word of his Grace:* and it is so called;

1. Because it is a Gift of *Grace*. It was Gods free good Will, why it was bestowed at all; and why one Age or Place of the World should receive it rather than another; and why God should discover the Mystery

ſtery that was kept ſecret ſince the world began, to thoſe who were ſinners of the *Gentiles*, ſerving dumb Idols, it is of *Free-Grace*. We may ſay of all theſe, *Even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy ſight*.

2. Becauſe the ſubject matter of the Goſpel is *Grace*; all beneſits contained in it, flow from *Grace*, whether they be bleſſings without us, or bleſſings within us. Election is of Grace, and *according to the good Pleaſure of his Will*, Epheſ. 1. 5. Our effectual Calling is according to *Grace*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. and our ſpiritual Birth, our Regeneration, is of *God's Free-will*, Jam. 1. 18. *Faith is the Gift of God*, Epheſ. 2. 8. Forgiveneſs of all our ſins, is *according to the Riches of his Grace*, Eph. 1. 7. *Juſtification is freely by his Grace*, Rom. 3. 24. And Life Eternal, is *the Gift of God*, Rom. 6. 23.

3. It is called *The Word of Grace*, becauſe it is an inſtrument, to impart and beſtow theſe Bleſſings upon us; it is an Inſtrument, through God's Bleſſing, to work in us the Life of *Grace*: *Of his own Will he begat us by the Word of Truth*, Jam. 1. 17. This enlightens our underſtandings, and turns us from darkneſs to light, *Acts* 26. 17, 18. This ſanctifies us; *Sanctifie them through thy Truth*; *thy Word is Truth*, John 17. 17. All the Gifts and Benefits of Free-grace, are imparted to us by it: hence it is called, *The Grace of God that brings Salvation*, Tit. 2, 12. It doth not only bring it to look upon, but by the power of its Ordainer accompanying it, doth make us partakers of it. —Now this Word of God's Grace, is great Comfort and Security for a departing Miniſter to commend his People unto. This is the ſecond part of the Remedy, I ſhall be brief herein—Now I commend you to this Word.

1. Becauſe it is of indiſpenſible Neceſſity. Happi-

neſs

neſs is the great principle Nature hath implanted in every creature; all its motions are in tendency to its reſt and tranquility. Now the happineſs and chiefeſt good of the rational Creatures, is *God*, who is the Fountain and ſupream End of all good: to enjoy him, is an Heaven to his People here on Earth; and the Heaven of heavens to Saints and Angels, to behold and enjoy his beatificial Viſion: And though the light of Nature, works of Creation and Providence, do manifeſt that there is a God, his Goodneſs, Lordſhip and Sovereignty over all, as to leave men *inexcuſable*, *Rom.* 1. 19. yet are they not ſufficient to give that Knowledge of God and his Will, which is neceſſary to Salvation, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. & 2. 13, 14. How little doth the Book of Nature teach us what an one God is, that there is a Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, three Perſons, and but one God, every of the three Perſons, God; the Father God, the Son God, the holy Ghoſt God, yet not three Gods, but one God! How little doth it teach us how this God will be worſhiped! how little doth it acquaint us with the excellent ſtate of our Creation, our miſerable Apoſtacy! how God came to be diſpleaſed with man, and how he muſt be reconciled, it tells us nothing; of our Redemption from Sin, Satan, the Wrath of God, by the Incarnation, Death and Suffering of the Son of God, it ſaith nothing; of the Day of Judgement and Reſurrection of our Bodies, it tells us nothing; and though it may poſſibly acquaint us with an immortal State, yet what that Happineſs is, and what that Miſery is, how we came to be deprived naturally of that Happineſs, and how it muſt be recovered, and who they be that ſhall enjoy it, it ſaith nothing; all which muſt be known before they can be believed, *Rom.* 10. and they muſt be believed before we can be ſaved, *John* 3. 16.

16. And therefore it pleaſed the Lord, at ſundry times, and by divers manners, to reveal himſelf, and declare his Will to his Church, *Heb.* 1.1. and afterward for the better preſerving and propagating the Truth, and for more ſure eſtabliſhment & comfort of the Church, againſt the corruptions of the fleſh, the malice of Satan and the World, that ſhe be not drowned in prophaneſs, dejected by perſecution, blinded by ignorance, miſled by errours, poyſoned by hereſies, ſuperſtition and idolatry, it pleaſed God to commit the ſame to writing, which makes the ſacred Scriptures moſt neceſſary, thoſe former wayes of God's revealing his will to his People being now ceaſed. The *Sun* is not more neceſſary to enlighten, warm, and make fruitful this inferiour the World, than the Word of God is for the World; better to want the *Sun* in the Heavens, than the Word of God in the World.

2. I commend you to this Word, becauſe it is a compleat Word, it is perfect as well as neceſſary: ſuch is the perfection of this Word, that nothing is to be added to it, nor diminiſhed from it, *Deut.* 4. 2. *Ye ſhall not add unto the Word I command you, nor diminiſh from it:* Yea, *if an Angel from Heaven ſhould preach and reveal another word than this, he is accurſed*, Gal. 1. 8, 9. God threatens, that if any man ſhall add to the things wrote in his Word, to add to him *all the Plagues wrote in the Book: And if any man ſhall take away from the Words of the Prophecy, God will take away his part out of the Book of Life*, Rev. 22. 18, 19. all which Commands and Threatenings had not been given, if God's Word had not been perfect: it is compleatly perfect for the information of our underſtanding and will, in things to be believed, and for our direction in things to be avoided and practiſed, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17, 18. *All Scripture is of Divine Inſpiration, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof,*

Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the man of God may be perfect, and thorowly furniſhed unto every good Work. This teacheth you all things neceſſary to be known and believed in order to Salvation; that there is a God, and what an one this God is, it teacheth you; that there is a Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity; that there is three Perſons, and but one God, every one of the Perſons God, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghoſt God, yet not three God's, but one God. It teacheth you what an one God is in his Attributes, in his Works of Nature, and of Grace. This tells you what was our Primitive Excellency and Happineſs in Creation, our Deformity and Miſery in our Fall. This perfectly declares our Redemption from Sin, Satan, Gods Wrath, by the Incarnation, Death and Paſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, that as Mediator and Redeemer, he is the Prieſt, Prophet and King of his Church; what he hath done, ſuffered and purchaſed for Us; Pardon and Juſtification, Peace with God and Reconciliation, Adoption, Grace and Glory. It aſſures us of a Day of Judgement, and Reſurrection of all Perſons from the Grave: Of the bleſſed Eſtate of the Godly; of the Miſery of the Ungodly; and the Eternity of both. This directs you in things to be avoided; all Duties of your ſeveral Relations to be practiſed; Duties of your general and particular Calling; Duties of Piety in the firſt Table; Duties of Righteouſs, Charity and Temperance in the ſecond Table; as Husbands and Wives, as Children and Parents, as Maſters and Servants, according to your Relations of Conſanguinity, Affinity, Friendſhip and Neighbourhood; and therefore we are commanded to lay the Word up in our hearts, *richly in all Wiſdom*, *Col.* 2. 16. and to ſpeak of it to our Children, when we ſit down in our houſes;

walk by the way, when we lye down, and when we riſe up, *Deut.* 11.18,19. Yea Kings, and ſupream Authorities of a Nation, muſt reade in this Book all their dayes, that they may fear God, and adminiſter Juſtice and Judgement to the People; that they may relieve the Oppreſſed; to be Encouragements and Defenders of the Good, and Terrours to Evil-doers.

3. I commend you to this Word, becauſe of its daily Uſefulneſs and Profitableneſs; every day and in every condition it is uſeful and profitable unto you. and very ſuitable.

1. It is a Light to enlighten and guide you. How uſeful and comfortable is Light to man ſhut up in a dark Dungeon! How uſeful and beneficial is a Light to a Traveller when the night is very dark, the Moon and Stars covered with pitchie Clouds, the way very miry and dirty, dangerous by pits and precipices, and eaſie to be miſtaken! By nature your ſouls are like a dark Dungeon, having no ſaving knowledge of God, of your ſelves, your ſin and miſery, nor of Chriſt the Sovereign Remedy. But this Word is *pure, enlighteneth the eyes, Pſal.* 19.8. This is the Chariot wherein the Sun of Righteouſneſs rideth, and by which he will ariſe and ſhine in the Horizon of your Souls, and turn you from Darkneſs to Light. This Light will guide you in all your wayes and actions; *a Light unto your feet*, and *a Lanthorn unto your Paths*, Pſal. 119.105. This Light will diſcover Satans Temptations, the Worlds Allurements, and direct you how to avoid the precipices of Prophaneſs, the ſinks of Sin; and how to walk in the Way of Purity and Peace. This Light will direct and comfort you in the darkeſt Night of Affliction.

2. It is a Touch-ſtone to try Doctrines whether falſe or true. When you ſuſpect a piece of money,

you

you will bring it to the touch-ſtone to try it, that you be not deceived, and take Braſs for Gold, Guilt-Tin or Copper for pure Silver; ſo you are to bring all Doctrines to the tryal and touch-ſtone of the Word, *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the Law and to the Teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no Light in them.* And *John* adviſeth us not to believe every ſpirit, but to try the ſpirits, *whether they be of God or no; becauſe there are many falſe Prophets gone out into the world,* 1 *John.* 4. 1. Take heed of Doctrines that hold a ſtrickneſs above what is written: as the Popiſh doctrines of Self-whippings, voluntary Poverty, Vows of Continency. The Apoſtle gives an Antidote againſt theſe, and many ſuch-like, *Col.* 2. 18, to 23. Reject doctrines that ſet up our own righteouſneſs, whether of Morality or Sanctification, in the room of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, that place good works in the Throne of Chriſt: doctrines contrary to Godlineſs, opening a door to Libertiniſm, Prophaneſs, crying down the Morality of the Sabbath, and Family-duties reject: for the Doctrine of the Goſpel is a Doctrine according to *Godlineſs*, *Tit.* 1. 1. a Myſtery according to *Godlineſs*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. Doctrines crying up the Traditions of men, placing Purity and Worſhiping of God, and Religion in them, but neglecting the Commandments of God; for ſuch worſhiping of God, is a *vain worſhip*, *Mark* 7. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Doctrines crying up Purity, to the ruine of Unity, reject: for the Goſpel calleth for Unity, as well as for Purity, *Epheſ.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. And Chriſt prayed for the Unity as well as for the Purity of the Church, *John* 17. 21, 22. Time will not permit me to give you any more inſtances, but I commit you to this true infallible Touch-ſtone of God's Word; and ſee that you be like thoſe noble *Bereans*, ſearching the Scriptures dai-

ly, whether theſe things you hear be ſo, *Acts* 17.11.

3. This is a Weapon to defend you. When the Souldier is to fight with his enemies, he arms himſelf, and takes his weapon in his hand. You, Sirs, are the Lord's Souldiers, to fight his battles againſt Sin and Satan: you have innumerable Enemies to encounter with, and overcome, before you can wear or obtain a Crown of Glory. The *Iſraelites* muſt conquer and kill the *Canaanites*, before they could poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*. Heavens Way, and the Crown of Glory, is beſet with many Enemies; enemies within you, enemies without you; ſo many ſins, luſts, and corruptions, ſo many Enemies; ſo many Temptations, ſo many Enemies; ſo many Devils, ſo many Enemies; and all theſe muſt be conquered before we can be ſaved. Now the Weapon by which you muſt conquer them, is the Word of God's Grace, the Sword of the Spirit, *Epheſ.* 6.17. This is the Sword whereby the Captain of our Salvation conquered our Grand Enemy, the Devil, in all his attempts, *Mat.* 4. His Practice calls for our imitation; his Conqueſt is our Encouragement: Are we tempted to Pride, this tells us, *God reſiſteth the Proud, and gives Grace to the humble*, Jam. 4.6. Are we tempted to comtemn Reproof? this tells us, *Such as harden themſelves, being often reproved, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy*, *Prov.* 29.1. Are we tempted to Drunkenneſs, to Whoredom and Uncleanneſs? this tells us, *None ſuch enter into the Kingdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 6.9,10. In a word, face and affront all Temptations to Sin, with the Threatenings of God, and with his Judgments upon wicked men. Doth the World and Devil promiſe thee great Preferments and Riches, if thou wilt follow them? tell them, God doth promiſe greater, better, and more durable Riches and

Dignities

Dignities. Doth he tempt thee to diſpair? tell him of the Fulneſs and Freeneſs of God's Grace, the Fulneſs and Freeneſs of God's Promiſes, the Greatneſs and Value of Chriſt Sufferings. And by a faithful and skilful managing of this Weapon, you ſhall overcome. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will fly from you.*

4. This Word is a ſpiritual Rain, *Deut.* 32.2. *My Doctrine ſhall drop as the Rain: my ſpeech ſhall diſtil as the Dew, as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowres upon the tender graſs.* What rain is to the Earth, and fruites thereof, the ſame is this Word to the Godly Chriſtian: when you are enflamed with Corruption, purſued with Satan, ſcorched with the Frownings of the Almighty, this as a pure Chryſtal Stream, will cool you, and refreſh you: *As the Hart, the chaſted Hart, paineth after the Water-brooks, ſo doth my ſoul after God, after the Ordinances of God,* Pſal. 42.1. This will ſoften your hard hearts, *Iſa.* 66. 2. 2 *Kings* 22. 11, 19. As rain, this will waſh you clean, when you are defiled: *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth,* John 17.17. This Word, as rain, will make you fruitful, and recover your decaying, withering Graces and Comforts, and make them freſh and flouriſhing, like *Trees planted by the Rivers ſide,* Pſal.1. Iſa.61.3.

5. This Word is a Comforter unto you. In all your Sorrows and Sufferings, this Word affords ſuitable and ſeaſonable Comfort to you: Are you with *David* in great ſtraits and exigencies, and your thoughts and debatings within you, like a troubled Sea, you know not what to reſolve on, which way to take? this will then afford you comfort, *Pſal.*94.19. *In the multitude of my thoughts, thy Comforts delight my ſoul, O God.* And again, *Thy Statutes have been my ſongs in the Houſe of my Pilgrimage, Pſal.* 119, 54. Are you filled

with ſorrow concerning your ſins? here are Promiſes aſſuring your Scarlet-dyed ſins, ſhall become as *white as Snow*, *Iſa.* 1.18. Here is a Sea of Mercy that can ſwallow Mountains, as well as mole-hills, *Mich.* 7. 18, 19. Are you troubled about the wants of Grace? here are gracious Invitations, for every one that will come, *and take of the Waters of Life freely*, Rev. 22. 17. Are you troubled about the weakneſs of Grace? he hath promiſed not to break *the bruiſed reed*, nor *quench ſmoaking flax*, *Mat.* 12. 20. Are you troubled concerning Temptation? he hath promiſed, *his Grace is ſufficient for you*; to lay no more on you than you are *able to bear*, and *glorifie his Strength in your weakneſs*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. 2 Cor. 12. Are you afraid you ſhall not perſevere? this aſſures, *you are kept by the Power of God to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

6. It is a Word to revive and quicken you, in ſoul-deadning times, and in ſoul-deadning ſins. The Faith of God's People begins oftentimes to ſtagger, *when the proud are called happy, and they that work wickedneſs are ſet up, and they that tempt God are delivered*, *Mal.* 3. 14, 15. This ſtaggered Jeremiah; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal treacherouſly?* Chap. 12. 1. And *David*, when he ſaw the ungodly proſper in the Earth, that they are not in trouble as other men, that they are not plagued like other men, ſaid, He had *cleanſed his heart in vain, in vain had he waſhed his hands in Innocency*, *Pſal.* 73. 5, 12, 13. but when he came into the Sanctuary of God, and conſulted the Word of God, then he underſtood their end, v. 27, 28. Read to this end and purpoſe, *Pſa.* 37. and conſider it well, and it will revive you under theſe diſpondencies of ſoul: When Afflictions like

waters

waters upon fire, fall on you, and deaden your Graces and Comforts, this Word will revive you and them: this is my comfort in my affliction, *Thy Word hath quickened me.* And again, *Unleſs thy Law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in my affliction,* Pſal. 119. 50, 92. And ſin committed will deaden your Comforts, your Graces. Great ſins are like a great blow upon the head, aſtoniſhes a man, layes him in a ſwond: ſo great ſins lay your Graces, Comforts in a ſwound; but this Word will revive you, be as *Aqua vitæ* to you. *David's* ſins of Adultery and Murder laid him in a ſpiritual ſwound, well nigh for the ſpace of a year, if not all out a year or more; he repented not of his ſins in all this time; but when *Nathan* the Prophet came to him with the Word of God, *David* then revived, 2 *Sam.* 12. And ſo for comfort under ſin.

7. *This Word is an Antidote of Sovereign Efficacy to preſerve you in the worſt of times.* When a man lives in an Air, in a City, in a Town, in a Family that are infected with the Plague, he will take a Cordial to fortifie himſelf againſt the Infection: Infection of an houſe with the Plague, is dreadful to the Inhabitants; and to have the Plague-ſore upon the body is a ſad affliction: but to be infected with the Plague in our ſouls is worſe; that brings temporal, this eternal death, unleſs cured or prevented. Now you live in an infected and an infecting world; amongſt corrupting and corrupted perſons, and the danger is great: but here is a word that will fortifie you againſt evil examples, promiſes, preferments, threatnings and ſufferings, and keep you from ſin; make you good in bad times; healthy and ſtrong in a bad air; *I have hid thy Word in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee,* Pſal. 119. 11.

8. *This Word will edifie and build up in Grace.* As we by a conſtant feeding upon our food, of infants a foot

long, we grow and increaſe to be men and women of a full ſtature: So when we are babes in Chriſt, new born, this Word by a daily feeding upon it by Faith, doth nouriſh us, until we come to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt: our Graces grow, and are increaſed and ſtrengthned according to our feeding upon it. Here is Milk for babes, Wine for the faint; ſtrong meat for them that are ſtrong Chriſtians. The builders of an houſe cut their timber, and ſquare their ſtones, and add timber to timber, and ſtone to ſtone, until the houſe be built up: So, ſaith the Apoſtle, this Word is able to build you up, it cuts off the remaining knots of ſin, and poliſheth you from the remainders of corruption, until you be made fit for the Temple of God in the higheſt Heavens.

9. *It will give you an Inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified.* It gives not by way of merit and purchaſe; but it ſhews you not only the Kingdom of Heaven, but points out the way, and directs you to it. It doth not only ſhew and lead you that way, but fits you for Heaven. Unleſs we be fitted for Heaven, we cannot come thither. The Lepers muſt not enter the Camp ſo long as the Leproſie was upon them. And *no unclean thing ſhall enter into Heaven*, Rev. 21. *ult.* The Temple of *Solomon* was all ſquared and fitted in the field, before it was brought together to be built up: So you muſt be fitted in the field of Grace, before you can be laid in the Temple of Glory. This Word then ſanctifieth you, purgeth the corruptions, the ſins of Nature; this Word ſtrengtheneth and increaſeth your Graces: it makes you holy with Saints here, and will make you happy with them hereafter: it brings Heaven and Glory into your ſouls here, and will bring you into Heaven and Glory hereafter, and give a poſſeſſion of that Inheritance which was prepared for you be-

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fore the foundation of the World, purchaſed for you by the Blood of Jeſus; an Inheritance far better than all the Crowns and Kingdoms of the World; one corner of it is better than a thouſand Worlds, for firmneſs, purity, duration, certainty, and ſcituation; *An Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for you*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. where you ſhall have the beſt ſociety; them that are ſanctified, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, all the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Children of God, both Miniſter and People, ſhall be gathered as Wheat, and ſafely reconded in the Garners of Glory. There ſhall be no *Iſhmael* to deride and ſcoff our devotion; no *Eſau* to purſue us; no *Pharoah* to oppreſs us; no *Ahab* to perſecute us; no *Doeg*, maliciouſly and falſly to accuſe us; no *Judas* to betray us; no Devil to tempt us; no Sin to wound us: All tears ſhall be wiped away from our eyes, and we ſhall enjoy Him, whom to enjoy is fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore.— Now, my Brethren, to this Word, that is of ſuch indiſpenſible neceſſity, ſuch compleat perfection, and of daily uſe and advantage, as being abundantly filled with all ſuitable Excellencies and Remedies for your ſouls in every condition, I commend you. Here is Light to enlighten and guide you; a Touchſtone to manifeſt Doctrines what they are unto you. Here is a weapon to defend your ſelves and conquer your enemies. Here is Rain to cool you, to ſoften you, to refreſh you. Here is a Cordial to comfort you, to revive and quicken you; an Antidote to preſerve you. Here is Liberty to free you, Fire to purge you, Food to nouriſh you; your *Magna Charta* wherein your Laws, Priviledges and Immunities are enrolled; a Treaſury of Comfort, a Teſtament full of Legacies; your Souls preſervative from Sin, and preparative to Glory.

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I have done with the Doctrinal part, I come now to the *Application*. And though I have ſpent my ſelf, and happily exerciſed your patience to the full, and the time far gone, yet give me leave a little more; have patience for your dying Miniſter. God knows whether ever or never I ſhall trouble you thus again; the pains is mine, I pray God the profit may be yours. If the Word of God's Grace be ſuch Security & Comfort to a left People. Be exhorted,

1. *To attend upon the Publick Preaching of the Word.* This is the ordinary and appointed means to get benefit for your ſouls. Thoſe that came to Chriſt were healed of their ſéveral infirmities and maladies. Would you have your ſpiritual maladies healed, your natures ſanctified, corruptions mortified, Grace implainted, Grace increaſed, ſtrengthned? Wait on the Word; for this is the ſtanding and appointed means. When *Joſeph* and *Mary* ſought for Chriſt, they could not find him in the Company, nor amongſt their Friends, nor in the City, but in the Temple, *Luke* 2. 43, 44, 45, 46. Think not to find God and Chriſt in ſinful company, in your houſes, nor in your fields nor flocks, but in his Ordinances; theſe are his Wine-Cellers and Banqueting-houſes, wherein he will feaſt your ſouls with ſpiritual dainties and varieties, *Cant.* 2. 4.

2. *Be frequent in reading it, labour to underſtand and believe it.* The oftner you reade it, the more you ſhall underſtand it; the more you underſtand it, the more you ſhall believe it; and the more you believe it, the more comfort and benefit you ſhall reap by it. What advantage will all the excellencies be to us, if we do not believe them? and how can we believe them unleſs we underſtand them? and how can we underſtand them, unleſs we reade it and hear it preached? Therefore be conſtant in reading every day ſome part of

God's

God's Word, ſeaſon your ſouls with it in the morning, let it lock up your thoughts in the evening. Here you have a preſcribed remedy for every malady, a plaiſter for every ſore: here is comfort for every ſorrow, and in all affliction; here is counſel in all your ſtraits: Deprive not your ſelves of the benefit, for want of reading, ſtudying the Word. You feed every day your bodies with your daily food, feed your ſouls with this food.

3. *Treaſure up the Word in your hearts. Let the Word of Chriſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *dwell in you richly, in all wiſdom*, Col. 3. 16. Where there is a Malady, there the Remedy muſt be applied: Your Malady is within; So many ſins, ſo many diſeaſes; ſo many ſins, ſo many wounds. This will be Phyſick to cure your diſeaſes: A Plaiſter to heal your wounds. Blindneſs is the diſeaſe of the underſtanding: Vanity the diſeaſe of the mind: Stubborneſs the diſeaſe of the will: And the ſin of each faculty of the ſoul, and member of the body, is the diſeaſe and wound of that faculty and member. But this Word dwelling powerfully in you, enlightens your underſtandings, fils your minds with heavenly mindedneſs; makes your wills obedient, heals every faculty, and every member, though it be in part. Phyſick doth not cure us, Cordials do not comfort nor ſtrengthen us unleſs we drink them; Plaiſters do not heal us unleſs we apply them; Food doth not nouriſh us unleſs we eat and digeſt it: No more will the Word of God be as Phyſick, as a Cordial, as a Plaiſter, as Food to purge ſin, to comfort us, to heal us, to nouriſh our Graces, unleſs it dwell within us. How can a Souldier defend himſelf, and beat his enemies, when he is a naked man, without his Weapons? you are naked, unarmed, if the Word dwell not in you. Well than, Be well acquainted with God's Menaces againſt ſin,

and

and his Judgments upon it: Be well acquainted with his Promiſes; that you have both in readineſs when occaſion requires.

4. *Walk according to it.* Make it a light to your feet, and a lanthorn to your paths, *Pſal.* 119. 105. This is the way of peace, *And as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them, and the whole Iſrael of God*, Gal. 6. 16. It is the way of ſecurity, read *Iſa.* 33. 15, 16. It is the way of bleſſedneſs; *Not the hearers, but doers of the Word ſhall be bleſſed* in the deed, *Jam.* 1. 22, 23, 24, 25. I ſhall give you three or four inſtances.

First, *In ſanctification of the Sabbath.* God hath given us ſix dayes to do our work in, and hath taken himſelf but one in ſeven to be ſerved in, and it is a robbing of God not to keep his Day holy. The Chriſtian Sabbath is a weekly commemoration of Chriſt's ariſing from the dead, and accompliſhing the great work of our Redemption: and in thankfulneſs for ſo great a mercy, be ſure you keep holy, be ſtrict in religious Duties, publick and private: Make conſcience of performing duty, and make conſcience of a right manner of performing duty: when others play, ſport, walk abroad, ſleep or talk at home, reade you the Word or good Books, pray and ſing praiſes to God. Such as are not careful to ſanctifie God's Day, care not for God, nor Religion any day. Such as deny him publick Worſhip, will deny private Worſhip: Such as are careleſs in performing publick Duties, are careleſs in performing private Duties; and *Curſed be they that do the work of the Lord negligently*, Mal. 1. *ult.*

Secondly, *Be careful to govern your Families according to the Word.* It was *Joſhuahs* reſolution, *That he and his houſe would ſerve the Lord*, Chap. 24. 15. and *David would ſuffer no wicked man in his houſe*, Pſal. 101.

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Be careful to offer to God a morning and an evening Sacrifice, reading ſome portion of God's Word: Be careful and conſtant to inſtruct your Families, your Children and Servants in principles of Religion, in the fear of God; ſeaſon them while they are with you, that they may be preſerved from infection when they are from you. Endevour that Husbands be holy, that your Wives be holy, that Children be holy, that Servants be holy; that your Families be as little Churches of God: The holineſs of a Family is the glory, the ſafety, the riches of a Family.

Thirdly, *Live in ſubjection to Supream Power and Authority of the Nation.* We are branded for Rebels, Fomenters of diviſions, labouring to fire the Nation with civil Diſcord, and engage it in another War; but our Practice and our Doctrine ſhall witneſs the contrary to the world. And therefore I charge you before God's holy Angles, and God himſelf the great Judge of the world; that ye be ſubject to the higher Powers. Be actively obedient ſo far as you may keep peace and a good conſcience within; and when you cannot obey actively, obey paſſively. Fear not *Joſephs* Priſon, nor *Jeremiahs* Dungeon, nor *Daniels* Lions Den for a good conſcience; *Praying for all in Authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in ALL godlineſs and honeſty.* Labour I beſeech you, by your quiet and peaceable lives to vindicate the innocency of your Miniſters, and their Doctrine, from thoſe black-mouthed blaſphemies and reproaches, envie and malice and ignorance hath caſt upon them: and doubtleſs God in his due time will revenge this diſhonour done to his Servants, whileſt they have ſtudied nothing elſe, and nothing more than the gaining of ſouls in a faithful diſcharge of their Miniſtry; when he ſhall manifeſt to the world, *vel*

Hoſtibus

Hoſtibus ipſis conſitentibus, that theſe railing *Rabſhakahs*, proud, aſpiring, and falſe accuſing *Hamans*, malitious *Doegs*; that the Swearers, Drunkards, Oppreſſors, Whoremongers, that the Sinners of a Nation, and ſuch as would ſet up *Dagon* by the Ark of God, or pull down the Ark, and ſet up *Dagon* in the room of it, that theſe are the bane of Kings, the ruine of Crowns and Kingdoms: That it is theſe men that turn our Calm into a Storm, our Peace into War, our Plenty into Scarcity; theſe, even theſe are the *Achans* that trouble our *Iſrael*; theſe are the *Jonahs* that raiſe theſe dreadful Storms that tear our Sails, break our Main-maſts, and ready to drive this goodly *Engliſh* Veſſel and ſplit her upon the Rocks of Diviſion: And demonſtrate that the Godly are the Iron-Bulwarks, the Brazen-Gates, the Chariots and Horſe-men of a Nation; that neither Kings nor Kingdoms proſper better, than when the Godly, and pure Religion proſper, and are defended: For ſaith the Wiſe man, *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but ſin is a reproach to any People.*

4. *Walk according to this Word in your mutual negotiations with men.* Oppreſs not, cheat not, cozen not, lye not for advantage, be upright, juſt and honeſt in your traffiquing in the world: account not gain to be godlineſs; but godlineſs with contentment to be great gain. And while you negotiate the concernments of the world with men, take heed you trade not with them for their ſins. Do all the good you can to others: and if you cannot do that good you would, take heed you receive not from them that evil you ſhould not receive. It is no ſmall part of pure Religion, for a man to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world, *Jams* 1. 27. Take heed of the ſins of the times and places you live in, and of the ſins of the perſons

you

you live and commerce with. Labour to be good in bad times, like *Noah* in the old world, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, and good *Obadiah* in *Ahabs* Court ; *That you may be blamleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God without rebuke in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation: among whom ſhine ye as Lights in the world*, Phil. 2. 15.

Now I have done with what I intended, but not as I could have deſired. According to thoſe weak abilities God hath given me, I have ſhewed you where your Security and Comfort lyes, in this my forced departure from you. When our Saviour was about to leave the world, he commends the tuition of his Diſciples to God the Father. When *Paul* left *Epheſus*, he commended the Miniſters *to God, and the Word of his Grace.* And now I am departing from you, I commend you to the ſame: I leave and intruſt you with the three Perſons of the Sacred Trinity; I commend you to God the Father, who I hope hath choſen ſome of you to himſelf before the foundation of the world; who hath given you to Chriſt, and made you accepted in his Beloved, to pardon you, to govern you, to provide for, and afford you all things pertaining to life and godlineſs: I commend you to God the Son, your Mediator, your Head, your Brother, your Husband, to deliver you from all the evil you fear, and obtain for you all the good you deſire: I commend you to God the holy Ghoſt to direct and teach you, to furniſh and adorn you, to purifie and cleanſe you, to ſupport and comfort you. Here is the Omniſciency of God whereby he knows what ever you want and hurts you: Here is infinite Wiſdome to teach and guide you; here is infinite and unchangable Love, to delight in you in your meaneſt and loweſt conditions: here is infinite Mercy to pity you in all your wants, weakneſ-

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ſes and ſufferings: Here is infinite Faithfulneſs and Diligence to ſave and ſecure every thing committed to him, that nothing miſcarry: Here is infinite Power to ſupport you, to defend you, to deliver you: here is an inexhauſtible Fountain of Grace to relieve your wants and weakneſs. Here is the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of all relations: the Captain, the Shepherd, the King, the Father, the Husband of the Church; here is a wonder-working God, wonderful in diſappointing the Plots of his Churches enemies; wonderful in delivering them by ſmall means; wonderful in creating means when there is none; wonderful in turning the Plots upon the Enemies head. Here is infinite Alſufficiency to provide for you; that can ſend you an *Eliſha* after an *Elijah*; that can feed you with the miniſtry of a black Raven; that can make your ſouls look freſher, fairer with Pulſe, than thoſe that feed on the dainties of Kings Tables; that can enrich your ſouls with the Gold and Jewels, with the Parts, Abilities, and Learning of the Egyptians: or, if he bring you into a Wilderneſs, can and will provide ſupplies of Grace, to bear your charges to Glory. Theſe, and whatever elſe there is in an infinite God that may further make for your ſecurity and comfort, I commend you to it, leave and entruſt you with Him, who is able to do for you abundantly more, above what I or you are able to ask or think. I commend you alſo to the *Word of his Grace*, which is of indiſpenſible neceſſity; which is perfect in all ſuitable excellencies and remedies for you, in all conditions and miſeries, and of daily uſe to you: A Light to guide you; a Touchſtone to manifeſt Doctrines what they are unto you; a Weapon to defend you; Rain to refreſh and cool you; a Cordial to comfort, quicken, revive you; an Antidote to preſerve you; that is able to build you up in Grace, and fit you

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for Glory. And as I entruſt you with theſe, ſo it is your great wiſdom and prudence to improve theſe ſeaſonable and ſuitably to your condition. The improvement of ſmall things is advantagious, when careleſs neglect makes great things unprofitable. What profit hath the Bee of the Hive in a Storm, if ſhe fly not to it? What profit in dainty Food, rich Attire, and Armour of proof, if we feed not on our Food, wear not the Attire, put not on the Armour? What ſecurity and comfort can you have in God, and in the Word of his Grace, if you do not improve them? Well then, as you would have ſecurity and comfort, be frequent in fervent Prayer to God, that as he is the great Shepherd of his Church, ſo he would provide for you an able Miniſter of the New-Teſtament, that may heal the diſeaſed, ſtrengthen the weak, reduce them that are ſtragled, and feed you with that food that will nouriſh you, even Life Eternal. It is very ſad to be as Sheep without a Shepherd: pray for the ſupply of deſolate Congregations. Pray for your Miniſter, and all others caſt out, that God would comfort them, ſupport them, provide for them, and defend them from other ſufferings, and reſtore them again to their particular Congregations. And pray one for another, and for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*. Live and depend by Faith upon an inviſible God in the midſt of viſible difficulties and dangers, deriving ſupplies of comfort and ſtrength of Grace from him.

Be frequent in reading the Word, and underſtand it; it is your Way, your Light, your Weapon and your Food. When you go from Church, do not as too many do, lay up their Bibles on ſhelves, in coffers, and never look on them more until the next Lord's day. It is the VVord of God written in your hearts, and dwelling richly in you in all wiſdom; not the word on

your ſhelves, in your coffers, that muſt guide you, defend you, and feed you. You are careful to lay up your temporal food ſafely and cleanly; O caſt not this precious food of your ſouls at your heels, as you do the cruſts you give your dogs: but begin and end the day with reading, underſtanding, treaſuring up ſome part of the VVord, and live according to it; ſanctifie God's Sabbaths according to it; govern your Families according to it; and manage all your negotiations with men according to it. And forget not thoſe things I have lately at large preſſed you to from that place, *Col.* 2. 6. Remember them, when you ſee me not, that *as you have received Chriſt, ſo walk in him:* For hereby you will abundantly adorn your Profeſſion, bring credit to the Goſpel, and honour to Jeſus Chriſt; hereby you ſhall ſilence and aſhame falſe Accuſers, rejoyce the hearts of God's People, promote your own Peace and Salvation, juſtifie the Doctrine preached to you from all aſperſions, and be a Crown of Glory and rejoycing to your dying Miniſter, both now and in the Day of Chriſt: Which that you may be directed and enabled to do and be, *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, that is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.*

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SERMON XV. by Mr. Joseph Moore, Sandy-acre, Derbyshire.

2 Pet. 1. 15.

Moreover, I will endeavour, that ye may be able after my deceaſe, to have theſe things alwayes in remembrance.

THe occaſion of theſe words, and of the Epiſtle, is this—The Apoſtle knowing (by Revelation, as is probable) that he was ere long to dye, ver. 14. *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me*; and fearing that many of thoſe to whom he wrote, were negligent enough in minding and perfecting the buſineſs of their ſouls Salvation; he therefore labours before his departing, to put them afreſh in remembrance of their duty, ver. 12, 13. *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of theſe things, though ye know them*, &c. as if he had ſaid, I know indeed that you who are the called of God, know theſe things in part already, which I am puting you in mind of; but there are ſome conſiderable reaſons why I would reinforce them again upon you; *viz.* (1.) From the nature of the things themſelves, they are of great concernment, even ſuch as relate to your Salvation, *ver.* 10, 11. (2.) From the proximity or nearneſs of his Death, *ver.* 14. *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off the Tabernacle of this body. q. d.* I am a dying man, ere long I ſhall be taken from you; and therefore I would leave this laſt Legacy with you; I would leave ſomething with you, which you might remember when I am dead and gone, in the words of the Text, *Moreover, I will endeavour, that ye may be able after my departure, to have theſe things in remembrance.*

In the Original they run after this manner—*I will endeavour that ye may alwayes have to make a remembrance of these things after my departure.* Others reade it thus, *I will therefore endeavour that ye may be able to have these things in remembrance,* &c. Therefore, that is, Seeing I am given to understand, that I must within a few days be taken from amongst you (translating the adversative Particle by an illative) therefore I shall leave this Epistle amongst you as upon record, that may ever put you in mind of these things when I am dead. Hence observe.

Observ. 1. That it is not unmeet for Ministers to inculcate and press the same Truths upon their People. Our memories are brittle, affections are ready to grow dull, and we fall into security in an insensible manner, which drowneth the force of former Truths.

Obs. 2. It is the property of good Pastors to take care of their Flocks for the future. Faithful Ministers should not only take care for their people, whilst they are present with them, but after they are gone from them; they being spiritual *Fathers*, should lay up for their *Children*. When Christ was to leave his Disciples, he leaves some Legacies behind him; he tells them what they might expect when he was gone from them; and how they should behave themselves in a sinful and troublesome world, *John* 16. 1,33. When *Paul* was to leave *Ephesus*, he sends for the Elders, and tells them how they should demean themselves *amongst the Flock over which God had made them Overseers*. We see how *Paul* was not only a good Shepherd himself, but he also provides suitable Successors, at least to direct, encourage and quicken those that were to succeed him, to the same diligence and faithfulness among the People as he himself had expresst, *Acts* 20. 28, 30, 31. When *Moses* was to be absent but forty dayes from the charge

charge that was committed to him, he takes care for the People, by leaving *Aaron* and *Hur* behind him, that they might direct and govern them, whilst he himself was in the Mount, *Exod.* 24.14. After these examples, I have made it my study, and shall make it my business at this time, to communicate *some spiritual Gifts to you.* And whereas he said, This is the *third time I am coming to you*, *Rom.* 1,11.; I fear I may say, this is the *last time* I am coming unto you. I cannot say with *Paul* (ver. 14.) that *our Lord Jesus hath shewed me, I must shortly put off my Tabernacle* (though that may be for ought I know) but this I may say, that providence seems to point out unto me, that the time of my departure from you in particular is at hand. *Gen.* 49.1. We reade that *Jacob* being to dye, calls his sons together, to give them some good instructions, and to tell them of things to come after his death. Now, Brethren, there is a Law extent which lookes upon many of my Brethren (as well as my self) who were, and are taking pains in the Lords Vineyard, as civilly dead; henceforth we shall not be in a capacity to preach to you in publick; many laborious Ministers after this day are likely *to be dead, even whilst they are alive*, if not as *long as they live.* And before I proceed, I would that you were freed from mistakes; Do not think we lay by our publick Work without cause: I would not that any of you should say concerning us, as *Pharoah* concerning the Children of *Israel*, *Ye are idle, ye are idle*, and therefore ye take occasion where none is given, to relinquish your People and your Service: it is not matter of will, but Conscience; if it lay in our wills, God that knows all things, knoweth that many hundreds of his Servants, would rather chuse to work, than sit all their dayes idle. But you are to understand, that such things are propounded to them, as

their Conſciences cannot bear: we have ſtudied, read, enquired and prayed for direction and ſatisfaction, and after all, we ſee our Conſciences would check us and reproach us, if we ſhould cloſe with all that is propoſed to us, and would be impoſed upon us: we may not in any caſe *do any evil that good may come*. He doth not require Miniſters to take any indirect courſes to do his work. He can bring about his own Glory without their ſin. He that doth any thing religious, moral or civil, muſt in the firſt place be groundedly perſwaded, that that which he doth, will be acceptable to, or allowed of God. Now as yet we for our own parts, do not ſee any reaſon to convince us that we ſhall do that which is pleaſing to God, in cloſing with every thing that is propounded to thoſe that will ſtay in their places. Particular reaſons why we cannot aſſent and declare a full conſent, &c. I have not now time ſo much as to mention. Having ſaid this little to prevent prejudice, and to ſilence wonder in you at this ſudden Declaration of our prefixed leaving of you, give leave to read the words once more, with a little variation, *Moreover, I will endeavour, that ye may be able after my* [*Departure*] *to have theſe things in remembrance*. The words of dying men uſe to be much regarded; ſeeing in ſome ſence we preach as dying perſons, be intreated diligently to attend to dying words. I have ſtudied that ye may keep in remembrance what ye have already heard; and to that end, of the things that have *been ſpoken, and of the things that ſhould have been ſpoken*, Heb. 8. 1. (if time and opportunity had been continued) I ſhall give you the ſum. That which we would have you keep in remembrance after we are gone, may be contained under two general Heads of Directions; *viz.* —

Firſt,

First, *Duties relating to God and your own Souls.*
Secondly, *Duties relating to your ſelves and others.*

The things that relate to God and your Souls, are either ſuch as relate,

1. To the Unconverted, and Converted, in general.

Or,

2. To the Converted in particular.

That which I have to ſay to you that are our Auditors in general, or as mixt, being ſome of you unconverted, and ſome converted; ſome whoſe hearts the Lord hath touched; and ſome, upon whoſe hearts, the Spirit of God hath not effectually moved, ſhall be contained in theſe following Counſels.

COUNSEL I.

1. Labour in good earneſt to be *born again*, John 3. 3. ſtudy to be *new Creatures*; ſtrive for the Truth of Godlineſs. Moſt of you have a *form and ſhew of Godlineſs*; but O labour for the Truth and *Power of it*: get ſanctified Knowledge into your underſtandings, Obedience in your wills; get your affections fixt upon divine and right Objects: never think it's well with your ſouls, till you find your anger, ſorrow and hatred principally ſet againſt ſin; your Love, Joy and Deſires upon God, Chriſt, and communion with him; till you find the bent of your ſouls towards the Wayes of Holineſs. Labour for tender Conſciences, ſuch as will be afraid of committing the leaſt known ſin, or of omitting the leaſt known duty. Outward Reformation, is nothing without inward Renovation. Regeneration makes men perform Duties as from a Spring and Fountain of Goodneſs; without Regeneration, men act & move in Religion, juſt as Clocks and Jacks,

which never moves but when ſome external weight hangs on; conſider, without this, we ſhall never get to Heaven, *John.* 3. 5. It is not thy promiſes of being a *new man*, but thy being a *new creature*; it is not thy being *chained*, but thy being *changed* that will fit thee for communion with God. The brute creatures are not fit to converſe with men, Becauſe they want a principle of Reaſon, which ſhould make them ſutable companions: Unregenerate men are not fit companions for God nor Saints in Heaven, Becauſe they want a principle of Holineſs, which ſhould make them take delight in the work of Heaven. To this end,

2. Get acquainted with, and live under the ſence of inherent, inbred corruption: This is the foundation of experimental Chriſtianity. Live under the ſence of that principle of evil we carry about us every day. When *Paul* was throughly converted, he was primarily convinced of this, *Rom.* 7. 17, 18. when he had a ſpiritual underſtanding of the Law, or of the Spirituality and internal extent of it, he ſaw there was *all manner* of *concupiſcence* in him, that is, an inclination and vehement deſire after thoſe things that were forbidden; and an unlawful deſire after things lawful in themſelves: he ſaw there was in him a forwardneſs to all kind of ſin. This ſight kept him low in his own eyes, and drave him out of a dependance upon his own righteouſneſs, to depend upon the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt. And ſo this would maintain humility and lowlineſs in our ſouls, and take away all opinion of our own goodneſs. Every man will boaſt of the goodneſs of his heart; the reaſon is, becauſe he doth no ſee nor conſider that inherent ſecret pollution that is in his nature. Were we enough ſenſible of the privation of original righteouſneſs, and

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inclination to all manner of wickedneſs, we would look upon our ſelves as the *chiefeſt of ſinners*, yea, as bad as the worſt in the world. Is thy heart good that naturally prompts thee to Atheiſtical, blaſphemous thoughts concearning God; that would lead thee to Idolatry, to Careleſneſs in the uſe of God's Name, Titles, Word and Worſhip? That heart which leads thee to irreligion, neglect of Prayer, Sabbaths, &c. Is that heart to be boaſted of that is full of Envie, Covetouſneſs, Anger, Revenge, unclean Imaginations and Deſires? Why this, and all this is contained in every of your hearts; be convinced of, and affected with it.

3. Often think of your actual tranſgreſſions; call to mind former ſins, forget not old iniquities. *David*, though a grown Saint, remembers, bewails and prayes for pardon of the ſins of *youth*, Pſal. 25. 7. *Remember not the ſins of my youth, nor my tranſgreſſions.* *Job* calls to mind the ſins of younger years, *Thou makeſt me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth*, Job 17. 26. And ſo for ſins of riper years, often think of them, reflect upon the ſins of thoughts, of your words and actions; call to mind the ignorance, the impenitance, the unbelief, the unthankfulneſs, the wanderings and diſtractions of former Prayers: call to mind how dull, ſleepy, and unaffected you have been in the hearing of many a precious Sermon. Compare your lives with the perfect Rule; ſee how they have agreed or diſagreed. Look your faces daily in the Glaſs of God's Word, and then you ſhall ſee how many ſpots are upon them. This very thing would make and keep us humble while we live, and ſhew us the ſhortneſs of our own wayes, and drive us to Jeſus Chriſt who hath perfect Righteouſneſs. The Swan is a proud bird, but when ſhe looks at her black feet, ſhe mourns. The reaſon why moſt

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are ſo ſelf-conceited of their own goodneſs, is, becauſe they look upon themſelves in preſent abſtinence from ſin, or in preſent good mood, and never look back upon former ſins. In a word, *Let your ſins be ever before your eyes.*

4. Beware of earthly-mindedneſs. Let it not be your only care to get the things of this life. 1 *John* 2. 15, 16. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* We are prone by Nature to mind Earth and nothing elſe. But conſider, that thoſe that are earthly-minded *are enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. There are many of whom I tell you weeping, who are enemies to the Croſs of ~~God~~ Chriſt, *viz.* thoſe who mind earthly things. Such perſons fruſtrate Chriſt of the end of his dying. He died to purchaſe an heavenly treaſure for us; he aroſe and went to Heaven, that we ſhould imitate him. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things that are above*, Col. 3. 1. Earthly perſons undervalue the death of Chriſt, he died to purchaſe Heaven, they care for Earth more than Heaven. Again, Earthly perſons will have a ſad end; *Their end is deſtruction*, Phil. 3. 19. Seeing ſuch men *put away Salvation from them*, whilſt on Earth, at laſt they ſhall be *put away from Salvation.* Again; Things below are neither a ſuitable nor a ſatisfying portion; Not ſuitable, your ſouls being *ſpiritual*, theſe *earthly*; not ſatisfying, your ſouls having *infinite* deſires, whereas theſe are *finite*; your ſouls *everlaſting*, theſe *fading*: 1 John 2. 17. *The World paſſeth away.* When we have got never ſo much, it *may* leave us, we *muſt* leave it. Again; Earthly-mindedneſs is Idolatry. *Col.* 3. 5. *And Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.* That which men deſire, love and delight in moſt, even ſo much as to make it their portion, that is their God. *Now we know that no Idolater ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

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Be exhorted in the words of Christ, *John 6.17. Labour not* (so much, or chiefly) *for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.* Luke 10. 41, 42. *Be not with* Martha *careful about many things, so as in the mean time to neglect the* [*one thing*] *needful.*

5. Be convinced that God is the best portion, and make him *yours.* You are never in a safe condition till you can experimentally say, *Who is there in Heaven but God, and who is there on Earth I can desire besides God?* Psal. 73. 25, 26. Labour to say with the Psalmist, *Psal.* 31. 14. *I said thou art my God.* And with *Thomas, My Lord and my God.* To this end, get an interest in Christ, receive him by Faith. *He that hath the Son, hath the Father also.* God promiseth it as a special priviledge, to be the God of any person or People; *I will be their God,* Jer. 31.33. When God is yours, Pardon of sin is yours; *I will remember your iniquities no more.* He wil accept and delight in your persons. *The Upright are his delight.* He will take pleasure in all your services. Cant. 2. 14. *Let me see thy face,* and *hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Your Prayers, Praises, Alms, &c. shall come up before God as *Incense, Acts* 10. 4. *Phil.* 4. 18. He will alwayes be with you, in every place, in every condition; When you are in your own, and when in a strange Country; when you are in prosperity, when in adversity. Moreover, all the Promises are yours. When God is yours, the Covenant is yours, of which the Promises are so many branches. If you be troubled with the *sence of sin,* he can *pardon* you; if *assaulted* with corruptions, he can *strengthen* you. If you be *sad,* he will *comfort* you; if you be *sick,* he will be your *Physician*; if *weak,* he can *strengthen* you. If *darkness* be upon your steps, he can cause the *Light to shine upon your paths.* If you are in *wants,* he can *supply* you; *his is the Earth, and the*

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Fulneſs thereof; if in *Priſons*, he will *viſit you*, and cauſe you to *ſing with Paul and Silas*: He is an omnipreſent Good, and an omniſcient Good, a willing and omnipotent and a ſure good. Men may take away your Friends, or you from them, but they cannot take away your God; your Eſtates, but not your God; your liberty, but not your God; your lives, but not your God. God will be a ſatisfying Good whilſt you live, a comforting and ſupplying Good when you dye, an Everlaſting Good after Death. Above all things then, get a ſhare and intereſt in this God, for he is the beſt Good, none like him; and as the Wiſe Man ſaith of Wiſdom, ſo let me ſay of God; *Get God, get Chriſt, God is the principal thing*; therefore *get* him, and withal thy gettings, *get an Intereſt in Chriſt*.

6. Get your hearts poſſeſſed with an awe & dread of Gods all-ſeeing Eye. Walk with a conſtant fear of God upon your ſouls; *Prov.* 23. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all day long*; whatever you think, ſpeak, or do, conſider God ſtands by, and *ſees* and *hears* all; he knows what thou thinkeſt and acteſt even in thy *bed-chamber*. This conſideration wrought mightily upon *Davids* ſpirit, which made him expreſs himſelf in this manner—*Whither ſhall I go from thy Preſence, whither ſhall I flee from thy Spirit*; there *is not a thought in thy heart*, nor *a word in thy tongue*, but *lo he knows it altogether*, Pſal. 139. *Per totum*. Many would be the advantages of ſuch a temper; it would keep us from many a ſin we run into: Prov. 16. 6. *By the fear of the Lord men depart from iniquity*; yea, this is preſcribed as a Remedy againſt all ſin in general; *Exod.* 20. 20. *That his fear may be before your eyes, that ye ſin not*. The reaſon why men do commit ſecret ſins, is, Becauſe they think no eyes ſees them. When Satan tempts thee, ſaying, Thou art alone, the doors is lockt, the windows ſhut;

ſhut; then ſay, Oh but God ſees me, the *darkneſs and the Light are both alike to him.* To this end, beg of God, he would maintain in your ſoul, more of an actual ſence of his Preſence; plead that Promiſe in which he ſaith, *I will put my fear in them that they may not depart from me, Jer.* 32.40. Unleſs God renew the ſence of his Holineſs and Omnipreſence, we ſhall grow atheiſtical and very ſecure.

7. Serve God according to his Mind and Will, neither add nor diminiſh in God's Worſhip; do *what* he bids us; *all* he bids us and *no more*; *Deut.* 12. 32. *What thing ſoever I command you, obſerve to do it, add not to it nor diminiſh from it:* we may not cloſe with added *ſubſtantial parts of worſhip.* Whatever power a Church hath about *natural Circumſtances*, they have none about the *ſubſtance* of worſhip, either to add or take away; by putting in, or putting out. To add new Ordinances or parts of Worſhip, is a breach of the ſecond Commandment. The Phariſees ered on this hand, *Mat.* 15. 19. *teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men*; they preſſed Gods Commandments, as indifferent and mens Traditions as neceſſary. God commanded to, *Honour Father and Mother*; they teach contrary to this, *ver.* 4. this was a diminiſhing. They teach that the waſhing of hands before meat, the cleanſing of cups, &c. as neceſſary to Salvation; this was to err by addition. See *Rev.* 22. 18. To add in God's Worſhip, is to make our ſelves *wiſer* than God, and to accuſe Chriſt of *unfaithfulneſs in God's Houſe. Moſes was a faithful Miniſter in God's Houſe*, much more was he who was *Moſe's Maſter.* Well, be ſure in all your worſhip, that it be according to the *Pattern ſhewed in the Mount*; *viz.* according to the *Manuſcript and Standard of the Scriptures.* It's very dangerous to offer *ſtrange fire*, ſuch as God *com-*

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hands not, *Levit.* 10. 2. Give not God cauſe to ſay to any of us, *Who hath required this at your hands.*

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Conſcience, and give him your heart in every duty.

9. Maintain an high eſteem, and make great Conſcience of the *Lords-Day*. Keep the whole day holy, morning and evening. It's not ſaid, remember to keep part of the Sabbath Day, *But keep the Sabbath*; *viz.* the whole Sabbath, *holy*, ſanctifie it in *private* as well as in *publick*; in your own houſes as well as in Gods Houſe; in your *Cloſets* as well as in your Families; do not only *keep* a Reſt, but *ſanctifie* that Reſt; How? By Meditation; meditate on the Sabbath, of that *Sabbatiſm that remains for the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Muſe upon the Joys of Heaven, which are *pure*, *ſpiritual*, *conſtant* and *perpetual*. Think of the ſweet Company you ſhall have, even Angels and Saints, beſides God and Chriſt, whoſe Preſence makes Heaven. Dwell upon your Immunities and Freedom from Sin, Temptations of Satan and the World; from troubles, as Sickneſs, Poverty, Croſſes, and every thing that makes your life uncomfortable. Imitate the *Reſurrection* and *Aſcenſion* of Chriſt, by *raiſing* your hearts from Earth, and *aſcending* into Heaven by ſpiritual Comtemplations. Moreover, continue the day by reading and ſinging of Pſalms; attend upon God in publick alſo: let not private duties hinder you from publick; neither ſtrive to attend ſo much upon publick Ordinances as to abridge your ſelves of private & ſecret Opportunities. I think thoſe Chriſtians do much wrong themſelvs, who ſpend all the day in attending upon publick prayers and hearing: I would not have you ſtrive to hear four or five Sermons a day, unleſs you can take ſo much time beſides, as is neceſſary to *meditate* of and *apply* what you hear; ſo order the day, that *ſecret* Communion with God, may fit you for *publick*; and *publick* Ordinances fit you again for *private* and *ſecret* converſe with God. It is not much eating, but eating moderately,

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rately, and digesting what we eat, that encreaseth strength. Two or three Sermons seriously heard, and ruminated upon in secret, do more good than ten Sermons heard, without meditation. Brethren, what shall we think? do those sanctifie a Sabbath to the Lord, who hear a Sermon and a few prayers, and then go to the Alehouse? they who drink, sleep, sport, walk, or work away the Sabbath? all these are forbidden, *Isa.* 58.13. *Thou shalt call the Sabbath a delight, not finding thine own pleasure,* nor *speaking thine own words,* nor *doing thine own works.* Again, Christ and his Disciples did not spend this Day partly in religious Exercises, and partly in Recreations or Workings; *John* 20.18. and *Acts* 20.7. we find there that Christ came amongst the Disciples on the First day, and that *Paul* and the Christians used to spend this Day in Prayer, preaching and receiving of Sacraments. Moreover, God will bless us inwardly and outwardly, if we conscienciously observe it: *Isa.* 58. 14. He will curse us inwardly and outwardly, in soul and body, if we prophane it. See *Jer.* 17. 27. Well then, my Brethren, do not prefer a *Holy-day* before the *Lords-Day.* Its sad to think that hundreds should more scruple to work on a *Saints-day,* (which is of humane institution) than on the *Sabbath* (which is of God's.) Sirs, you of this place have got (shall I say an undeserved *name*) of more than ordinary piety, but I assure you, that if you fall to neglect and prophane the Sabbath (as some of our neighbours do) you shall lose your very *Name.* I should be very sorry to hear when I am gone, that you should prove a *Sabbath-breaking-People.*

10. Make great Conscience of Prayer, *family* and *secret.* Let your houses be *Houses of Prayer:* Those families are called *Heathenish Families,* that *call* not upon God; *Psal.* 79. 6. *Power out thy Fury upon the Heathen,*

Heathen, the Families that call not on thy Name.

Let God have a *morning* and an *evening Sacrifice* from you. Under the Law God called for the *firſt Fruits*, and there was a Feaſt of *Ingathering*, or of the *Laſt Fruits*, when the whole harveſt was gathered in. Oh let God have the *firſt* and *laſt* of every day: How ſhall your Families be diſtinguiſhed from your Stables, if you do not ſanctifie them by Prayer? The Creatures which God hath given us for our uſe, they eat, drink, work and ſleep; now if we call not upon God daily, what difference would there be betwixt our *houſes* and our *ſtables*? And ſo enter into your Cloſets, *Mat.6.6. and pray unto your Father which ſeeth in ſecret.* Have you no *ſecret* ſin to bewail, no *ſecret* requeſt to put up, no *particular Mercy* to praiſe God for, which you would not have others to know of? Is it not a rare Priviledge that we may have liberty to prefer our private Petitions to the King of Heaven every day? that we may confeſs our faults, beg pardon, eaſe our heavy hearts, by laying them open before that God, who will neither upbraid us for our weakneſſes, wants, nor ſins? Brethren, be conſtant, ſpiritual and fervent in Prayer, and it will prove like *Sauls Sword*, and *Jonathans Bow*, *which never returned empty.* Do not hearken to the excuſes of fleſh and blood (which are many) but attend to God's Command, the Example of Chriſt and his followers, which will oblige you in point of duty; and to the Sweetneſs and Benefit of it, which may encourage and allure you.

11. Think much of, and live in preparation for death; *walk* now and then amongſt the Tombs; live every day as dying men. Get into ſuch a Condition as would fit us for Death every hour. *Dye daily.* Deut. 32.29. *Oh that you were ſo wiſe as to conſider your latter end.* Dying thoughts would not be a little advantage-

ous; they would keep from ſin; What, ſin this hour, when thou mayeſt die next? they would keep us from doting upon the world; from pride of life: Why art thou proud of hair and beauty, when both ſhall be turned into duſt ere long? Shall you and I idolize a *coloured piece of clay*, who though now it proudly and haughtily *treads* upon the Earth, within a few dayes ſhall it ſelf be *trodden* upon as mire and dirt? O get to be in the number of thoſe ſervants, whom Chriſt when he comes ſhall *find ſo* being and ſo *doing!* The Prophet ſaid to *Hezekiah*, *Set thy houſe in order:* I ſay to you, Set *your ſouls in order* againſt the hour of dying. The want of this is of ill conſequence: for hence it is that men go on ſecurely in ſin, live as Atheiſts, without God, idolize the World, and never look to the ſtate of their ſouls.

12. Prepare for *Judgement*; make your Anſwer ready. Put the caſe before-hand to your ſelves; ſay with thy ſelf, I muſt ere long appear before the Tribunal of God, what can I anſwer, what can I ſay for my ſelf at that day? Who is it that will be Advocate? or, have I an Advocate that will ſpeak for me? how ſhall I come off; ſhall I *ſtand*, or ſhall I *fall?* what will be my ſentence? Brethren, be like him who thought he heard this voice alwayes ſounding in his ears, *Ariſe ye Dead and come to Judgment.* The Apoſtle *Paul* thought ſeriouſly of it, and lived as one to be judged. 2 Cor. 5. 10. *For we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, to give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil.*

13. Be often thinking of *Eternal Death.* Walk now and then upon the *brinks* of Hell; get your hearts affected with the *reality* and *greatneſs* of Hells torments. Meditate with thy ſelf what Hell is; ſay with thy ſelf, Can I endure to loſe the ſmiles of God? how ſhall I endure

endure the frowns of an infinite Majeſty? If God's terrors have *diſtracted* his Friends on *Earth*, what will they do with me if I go to *Hell*? Think what a torment it wil be to be ſhut out of the company of Saints; to ſee *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Peter*, *Paul*, and the reſt of the Diſciples and Servants of God in all ages, *in the Kingdom of Heaven*, *and you your ſelves ſhut out*; and what a vexation it will be, to be amongſt none but damned wretches? How canſt thou endure to hear the Saints ſinging *praiſes* in Heaven, and thou thy ſelf *roaring* in the infernal Pit? Often think of the *Worm* of Conſcience. How ſhall we endure to have Conſcience alwayes ſetting our ſins before our eyes? It's a burden now to lie under the gallings of an accuſing Conſcience; O conſider, that Conſcience will continually gnaw and fret in Hell. It will be alwayes telling thee of thy ſins; the *place* where, the *time* when, the *perſons with whom*, and all the circumſtances that aggravate thy ſin. Such a time, remember, thou waſt overcharged with Drunkenneſs; ſuch a time thou blaſphemedſt the holy Name of God with Oaths and Curſes; Such a time, in ſuch a chamber, with ſuch a perſon thou waſt wanton and impure; Remember, what means of Grace thou haſt enjoyed, what and how many Sermons thou didſt or mightſt have heard; how many able Miniſters lived and dyed in thy time; Remember (will Conſcience ſay) what Inſtruction, Reproof and Corrections thou hadſt from thy Parents, Tutors and Governours; yea, remember, thou waſt not *far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, thou didſt fully expect to have gone thither, and now thou muſt be *tormented in this flame*. Again, think what a *miſery* it will be, to be there where is *no mercy*; where there will be *pain* without *eaſe*, *ſorrow* without any *joy*, *deſpair* without any *hope*, *eternity* without *end*. O Eternity, Eternity,

Eternity! Often to think of eternal death is the way to eſcape it. If you would not deſcend into Hell *really*, deſcend into it *mentally*. If you would not be in Hell by *poſſeſſion*, be much in it now by *meditation*. This would make us jealous, and put us upon trying the ſtate of our ſouls, leſt it ſhould unexpectedly be our portion to be amongſt the Devil and his Angels for ever.

14. Begin betime to be Religious. Put not off *Holineſs*, *Righteouſneſs*, and *Sobriety* till old age. 1 *Kings* 18.12. It's written in commendation of *Obadiah*, that *he feared the Lord from his youth*. It's King *Joſiah*'s honour, that while he was *yet young*, *he began to ſeek the Lord God of his fathers*, 2 Chron. 34.2,3. It's *Mnaſons* honour that he was an *old Diſciple*, Acts 21.16. he began betime and continued till old age. *Timothy* knew the Scriptures from *his youth*; Conſider, we know not whether old age will be granted us to be religious in; be religious whilſt ye may. The ſooner we ſet upon Piety, the ſooner we ſhall honour God, and the better God will take it. He will remember the *kindneſs* of *religious youth*. And by minding Religion ſoon, we may be ſecured from many ſins which others run into, and ſo be ſecured from the ſmart and torment of Conſcience which old ſinners find at Converſion.

1. The longer we continue in ſin and profaneſs, the more ſorrow, contrition and humiliation we are like to meet with if ever we be changed. Old Oaks muſt be *broken*, they will not *bend*. *Rough* Trees muſt be *hewn* with Axes; ſo *old* Sinners muſt find *rough* dealing at converſion. If you would come home to God *comfortably*, come *quickly* and early; The ſooner you begin, the more ſweetneſs you will find; *All God's Wayes afford Pleaſantneſs*, *and in all his Paths there is Peace*.

2. Having

2. Having delivered the Counſels that concern you all in general, let me now direct my ſpeech to the Regenerate in particular. To you whom the Word of God hath been *the Power of God to Salvation*, I would commend theſe things, that they may be kept in remembrance.

II. *COUNSEL.*

1. Be very thankful for any good which God hath wrought in you by the means of Grace. God is takeing away in ſome meaſure, the pure and powerful diſpenſation of his Ordinances, and this is matter of ſorrow; O but God hath made them advantagious to your ſouls already, and this is matter of praiſe, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 3, 5. Give thanks to God, ſeeing the Goſpel hath come to you not *in word only, but in the power of the holy Ghoſt*. You then that can experience a new *Light* in your *minds*, *Conviction* in your *conſcience*, a *change* in your *wills*, and holineſs in your *affections*, and *union with Chriſt*, *give God the praiſe*. It had been a miſery indeed, if God had taken us away from Miniſters, or Miniſters from us, before we had got any good by them. Thoſe amongſt you that are ignorant, hard-hearted, unbelieving ſinners, have reaſon to be grieved at the very heart. The *Sun* of the Goſpel is eclipſing, and you are not yet *enlightened* by it: the *fire* is putting out before your ſouls be *warmed*. It is a ſad ſign thoſe are in the number of the ſons of *perdition*, from whom the clear *Goſpel is hid*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. *If the Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt*. The Child unborn cannot midwife it ſelf into the world, when the Mother is dead; but there is hopes that an Infant that is born may be nouriſhed up even unto a perfect man. Why Brethren, unconverted perſons are unborn, and if Faithful Miniſters and Ordinances

ſhould be altogether taken from you, both Father and Mother dye, and then, who ſhall make you partakers of the new Birth? But now you that are born again, you will be able in ſome meaſure to feed your ſelves; the *meat* is before you in the Scriptures, and the holy Ghoſt will help you to *feed* on it: If there ſhould not be a ſucceſſion of Paſtors amongſt you, your condition may be *ſad*, but it is *ſafe*; if you ſhould dye without the continuance of Ordinances, having a part in the *Reſurrection* from ſin to a new Nature and holineſs of life, the *ſecond Death ſhall have* no *dominion over you*. If you live longer, you have former Experiences, former Truths, former Promiſes, old Store to live on; You have the granary of Experiences and of the Scriptures to maintain you in ſpiritual Life, if there ſhould come a Famine of publick Ordinances. God hath not dealt with every ſoul as with yours. Two or three of you have lived under the ſame Miniſtry, have ſit and heard together in the ſame Seats, yea, [*one*] of you is [*taken*] the [*other*] is [*left.*] Say then with a thankful heart, as Chriſt, Why haſt thou *revealed thy ſelf to me and not to others? Even ſo Father becauſe it ſeems good in thy ſight*, Mat. 11. 25.

2. Walk humbly before God in a ſence of your inſufficency to good, and proneſs to evil, *Mic.* 6. 8. *walk humbly with thy God*. Never walk ſecurely, ever be jealous of your deceitful hearts. Take heed of *falling* into ſin, though at preſent you *ſtand*. Ever live under the ſence of that truth, that *the heart is deceitful above all things, and madly wicked*. What Maſter that knows the deceitfulneſs of a Servant, would truſt him too far? and ſo, who that hath had frequent experience of the falſneſs of his heart, would put too much confidence in it for the future? Ever keep low thoughts of your ſelves; live continually in dependance upon God for

ſtrength

ſtrength to perform duties, to ſubdue corruptions, reſiſt temptations, and to bear afflictions. *Paul prayed thrice* i. e. *often*, when *he had a thorn* in the *fleſh*, a *meſſenger of Satan to buffet him.*

3. Beware of every ſin; have and expreſs godly ſorrow for it; *break off every iniquity by repentance.* Beware eſpecially of, and keep your ſelves from *your iniquities*, Pſal. 18. 23. Cut off your *right hand*, and pluck out your *right-eye-ſins*, Mat. 5. 29. *God hates it*, Jer. 44. 4. it grieves him: *They rebelled and vexed his Spirit*, it will grieve you alſo: 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. *and war againſt the ſoul*, i. e. againſt the *Peace* and *Tranquilty* of your minds: every ſin contracts *guilt*, and guilt creats *trouble.* It's impoſſible a Chriſtian ſhould walk comfortably whilſt he ſhowes any liking to any ſin. Sin doth eſpecially prejudice us as to Prayer, both before, in, and after Prayer, it *ſhuts our eyes* that we dare not *lift them up* to Heaven; *O my God, I bluſh, and am aſhamed to look up*, Ezra 9. 6. It *ſtops* our *mouths* that we cannot *ſpeak*, and *manacles* our hands, and contracts our hearts that we cannot *lift* them up to God. If we would lift up hearts and hands in Prayer without *doubting*, we muſt lift up *holy hands*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Sin makes a Chriſtian act like an enemy towards God, and to think God is juſtly turned to be his enemy; and who can with any heart ask any favour from an enemy? If we would draw near to God in *full aſſurance* of Faith, we muſt come with an *heart ſprinkled from a guilty and defiled conſcience*, and our *lives waſhed with pure water*, Heb. 10. 22. Again, the leaſt ſin ſmiled upon, puts us back in our Chriſtian courſe, it weakens Faith, takes away our Courage, diſheartens us from doing our very duty. How canſt thou reprove another with courage (ſaith conſcience) when thou thy ſelf knoweſt thou ſtandeſt in need of reproof? well than, exer-

cise daily repentance for daily failings; sue out a pardon every day, and get *one Seal more added to your Pardon* daily; you have as much need to pray for daily forgiveness as for daily bread.

4. *Grow in Grace*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. Make progress in holiness; take heed of decaying, beware lest God's Ministers lose the things they have wrought upon and amongst you, 2 *Ep. John*, ver. 8. Increase your knowledge, *Follow on to know the Lord*; let your repentings for sin be *kindled*; go from one degree of Faith to another; let your love to God *abound more and more*. The more Grace you have, the more you will glorify God, the fitter you will be to do him service, the more able to bear affliction; a little Grace is not enough to bear great Trials, and the more Grace the fitter for Glory, yea and very probably the more Glory. To this end continue in the use of those means that uphold and encrease Grace; *Ex eisdem nutrimus ex quibus constamus*. Feed upon the Milk of God's Word, and the Blood of Christ, that you may grow *thereby*. I *commend you to the Word of God's Grace*, Acts 20. 32.

5. Make conscience of all your thoughts and words. Do not entertain vain and unprofitable meditations; especially beware of Ungodly, Athiestical, Envious, Repining, Quarelsom, Impure thoughts; God sees them and is angry at them, *The Lord knows the thoughts of man, when they are vanity*, Psal. 94. 11. He will call us to an account for them; in the Day of Reckoning he will Judge the *secrets* of men, *Rom.* 2. 17. and then every *private* and *close thing*, shall *be brought to light, whether it be good or wether it be evil*, Eccl. 12. *ult.* Entertain holy and profitable conceptions. Carry something every day in your minds that is worth thinking of, when you are at leasure, and out of imployment.

Let

Let ſome *Experience*, *Promiſe*, *Threatning*, or ſome *Obſcure* place of Scripture which hath been explained to you, or ſome profitable part of *Scripture-Story* be treaſured up in your minds, that ſo you may not be at a loſs how to imploy your thoughts, when you have any vacant hours: Sin many times enters in by the thoughts; beware therefore of, and ſilence ſinful conceptions and *imaginations* leſt they produce *ſinful actions*. And ſo, make conſcience of your words, beware of idle, frothy, wanton expreſſions, for of every ſuch we muſt give account. Let not your communication be ſuch as that it ſhould *corrupt* the *manners of thoſe* you converſe with, *David* was careful of his words, *Pſal.* 39. 1. *I will take heed to my wayes that I ſin not with my tongue.* I conclude this with that in *Epheſ.* 4. 31. & 5. 4. Let all *Bitterneſs*, and *Anger*, *Wrath*, *Clamour*, and *Evil-ſpeaking be put away from among you, as becometh Saints*; and *Filthyneſs*, and *Fooliſh talking*, and *Scurrilous jeſtings*, *which are not convenient*.

6. Be, and continue to be, good in evil times. In times of prophaneſs be you holy: by how much others are *worſe*, by ſo much be you *the better*. It's *Noahs* commendation, that he was upright *in* [*his*] *generation*, Gen. 6. 9. now the generation in which he lived was very wicked. *Lot* was *pure* in an *impure Sodom*. Say, as *Joſhua*, Chap. 24. 15. Chuſe you whom you will ſerve, *but I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord*: So let us ſay, let others prophane Sabbaths, we will ſanctifie them; let others *deſpiſe* Prayer, we *will call upon God as long as we live*. Be not ſtumbled becauſe you ſee the way of holineſs *every where ſpoken againſt*: Fire burns the hoteſt in winter nights; let your zeal for God's Honour appear when others are Luke-warm and Cold. Do not think the worſt of holineſs becauſe contemned by wicked men; they are

fools,

fools, and are not competent judges. Who thinks the worse of himself because a fool laughs at him. Gold is gold still, though thrown into the dirt by a mad-man: so Religion is Precious and Honourable still, though mad-men throw dirt upon it.

7. Let your life be a *walking* with God. Manifest Holiness and Piety in every turn of your lives. *Be holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ, *in every turn*, manifest *Holiness* in every *calling*, in every *condition*, in *prosperity*, in *adversity*, in every *relation*; when you are *single*, before you *change* your condition, and whilst you are in a *married state*. A Christian may shew much of Piety in all these circumstances. Be holy, not only at sometimes, but alwayes.

8. Live the *Life of Faith*. Gal. 2. 19. the Life of Faith is an excellent Life; it gives God the glory of all his Attributes, of his Wisdom, Goodness, Faithfulness, Power, &c. It's a comfortable life. *Believing, we have joy unspeakable and full of glory*. It keeps the soul from sinking under wants and troubles. Faith (as I may so say) holds life and soul together. If you live not the life of Faith, ye cannot live; see how much there is of *unbelief*, so much there is of *death*, yea, unbelief is sometimes a promoter of temporal death; That which the Apostle saith of *worldly sorrow*, that *it worketh death*, even natural death; the same I may say of unbelief, that it doth in it self hasten death; for whilst infidelity and distrust prevails, sadness, discontent, vexation, repining, and murmuring, and fear prevails; and all these are enemies even to the body of a Christian. Moreover, if we live by sence, we shall lose much of our spiritual life; your Graces and your Comforts will dye, your Love, Hope, Joy, and Delight in God will decay, yea, all Religion will decrease and grow faint; Faith is the life of all Graces and

Duties,

Duties. Sence and Reaſon is many times at its wits ends, *we know not what to do*, (but Faith is never at a loſs) *But our eyes are towards thee*, there *is Faith*; in the former expreſſion was the language of Senſe. Faith realizeth ſeeming impoſſibilities, and *preſentiates things afar of*, Heb. 11. 1. Act Faith for every thing wanting for your ſelves, or for the Church. Do you want pardon of ſin? is conſcience burdened with the guilt of your corruptions? act Faith upon ſuch Promiſes as theſe, *Iſa.* 1. 18. *Though your ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they be like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool*, and in *Hoſ.* 14. 4. Do you want Righteouſneſs to make you amiable in God's Eyes? live upon that Promiſe in *Jer.* 23. 6. *He ſhall be called, The Lord our Righteouſneſs*: and that in 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Do you want purging Grace, would you feign be waſht from the filth and pollution of your luſts? Plead ſuch a Promiſe as that in *Ezek.* 36. 25. *I will ſprinkle you with clean water that ye may be clean; from all your filthineſs will I cleanſe you.* Do you deſire perſevering Grace? and are you fearful of falling away? urge that place in *Jude* 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling*, &c. and *John* 10. 28, 29. *I give unto them eternal life*, and *they ſhall never periſh: my Father is greater than all*, and *none ſhall pluck them out of my hands.* Live by Faith for Counſel, when you are in the dark, and cannot ſee your way clear; *Iſa.* 42. 16. *I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtreight.* For proviſion, when in ſtraits; for ſecurity and preſervation in a time of danger, from *Iſa.* 33. 16. *His place of defence ſhall be the Munition of Rocks: Bread ſhall be given him; his Waters ſhall be ſure.* And ſo for the Church. Live by Faith for the reſtoring of a faithful Miniſtry, from *Jer.* 3. 15. *I will give them Paſtors after my own heart, which ſhall feed them with know-*

knowledge and understanding. For the restoring of an instituted Worship, *Mal.* 1.11. *In every place Incense shall be brought, and a pure offering.* Mal. 3.3. *I will purifie the sons of Levi, and they shall offer to the Lord a pure Offering in righteousness.* Believe for the returning of God to his Church and People, after his seeming departure and forgetting them; *Isa.* 49.14, 15, 16. *Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee; thy walls are continually before me.*

9. Expect and prepare for *Troubles.* A Christian's way to Heaven is not alwayes strewed with Roles. Piety hath heen persecuted from the beginning of the world. Wicked *Cain* killed righteous *Abel*, because *Abel's* deeds were righteous. *Ishmael* persecuted *Isaac*, even in *Abraham's* family. Christ left this Lesson to his Disciples when he left the world, *John* 16.2. *These things have I told you beforehand, that ye should not be offended: They shall excommunicate you from the Synagogues. Yea, the time comes when he that kills you, shall think he doth God service.* If you resolve to follow *Christ*, you must resolve to bear his *Cross* after him, as *Simon* did. Forgo the love of friends, rather than the love of God. 2 *Tim.* 3.12. Christ doth not always call *His* do die for him, but he expects they should be willing and prepared to do so, if he require it. See *Luk.* 14. 26, 27. *Whosoever leaveth not father and mother, cannot be my Disciple. Leaveth not*, that is, in *affection* and *disposition*, and when the time comes, in *execution* and reality. Every Christian must be an habitual Martyr, though all are not so actually. To this end lay up suffering Graces; as Faith, Love, Patience, *&c.* get your hearts warmed with a sense of Christs love to you, in doing and suffering so much for us; let your love be so vehement, that many waters may not be able to quench it; and then sit loose to every creature: A

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man will with eaſe part with that to which he is dead already.

10. *Prove all things.* 1 Theſſ. 5. 21. Take not upon truſt, do not, *jurare in verba Doctoris*, believe any Doctrine meerly becauſe ſuch an one delivers it as is cryed up in the world for ſome-body. Be like the *Bereans*, who *ſearched the Scriptures daily, to ſee whether the things they heard were ſo or no.* Whoever ſhall preach to you, if he brings any Doctrine, or adds any new Article of Faith, try them. Every Chriſtian hath a *Judgment of diſcretion left him*, whereby he may try, whether that which is preſſed upon him, either for *belief* or *practice*, be according to the *Analogie* of Faith. We muſt not reſt in a blind implicit faith; it's for *Romaniſts* to believe as the Church believes; and what it is the Church believes, they underſtand not. *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to that, it is becauſe there is no light in them.* And ſo if they preach any new Worſhip, bring it to the Touch-ſtone; ſee if it be not without Warrant from the Scriptures; try whether it be not *gilded Superſtition*, or will-worſhip, under the cloak of *Decency* and *Order*. If any ſcruple ariſe in your minds, and you not able to ſatisfie your ſelves, conſult with able Chriſtians, or ſome able and faithful Guide. *Seek knowledge* at the *Prieſts lips*, even in private as well as publick. All is not Gold that looks like it. See what the great Doctor of his Church ſaith, *Matth.* 23. 7, 9. *Call no man Rabbi*; that is, do not tye your Faith to his Dictates; do not believe becauſe he ſaith it. Many dubious and controverted things are creeping, even at this time, into the Church, therefore try them. Satisfie your minds and judgments, before you proceed to practice. Be ſure that what you do ſhall have God's approbation. Worſhip God from *Judgment*, not from *Preſidents*.

11. Be

11. Be frequent and diligent in reading and meditation. For ought I know, this may be one of the greateſt helps we may have. 1 *Tim.* 4. 13. Take that advice of *Paul* to *Timothy*, *Till I come, give attendance to Reading*: So, till God's Miniſters be returned to you again, give attendance to Reading. When you cannot have Scriptures read and preached in God's Houſe, then make a *Church of your own houſe*. *Phil.* 2. *Paul* commends himſelf to *Philemon*, and the Church in his houſe; this is a high Commendation of him, that he had *Domeſticam Eccleſiam*, a houſe-hold Church. As *Calvin in loc.* In *Mal.* 4. 4. we meet with this Exhortation, *Remember the Law of Moſes my Servant, which I commanded to all Iſrael, with the Statutes and Judgements.* Doubtleſs they had been commanded frequently before this time to remember the Commandments of God; therefore there is a peculiar reaſon why the Prophet repeats it, and concludes his Prophecy as it were, with this Exhortation; the reaſon is this; *Malachi* was the laſt of the Prophets, after him the *Jews* were not to have any more Propheſying, till the coming of the *Meſſiah*; he knew how prone they were to follow the dictates of their own hearts, and to walk in their own inventions, to ſwerve from God's Inſtitution (as how ſoon did *Iſrael* fall to Idolatry, when their Prophet *Moſes* was abſent from them but forty dayes, *Exod.* 32. 1, 2, 3.) he therefore adviſeth them in this interim to attend to the Law of God delivered by *Moſes*, and the Writings of the Prophets, which were as Commentaries upon that Law, that they would continue to reade, and meditate, and act according to that Law, till the great Prophet ſhould come. Brethren, I cannot ſay, that we that are about to be ſilent, are the laſt Miniſters you ſhall hear (no, I ſuppoſe you may have others ſucceed us, whoſe Apprehenſions and Judgments

ments concerning the things in controverſie, may be different from ours, and may ſuffer them to condeſcend to, and cloſe with more, for the continuance of their Opportunities, than others can) Now if God doth provide you a Succeſſor, if he be one that ſpeaks according to the Law, and propheſies according to the *Analogy of Faith*, I would not adviſe you to ſeparation from publick Ordinances; no, when they may be had in God's Way, when the preaching of the Word is found, and the Subſtantials of the Ordinances obſerved, and may be enjoyed without ſinful Appendixes, though you ſhould take pains to fetch them, or go ſome conſiderable way to enjoy them, they are to be prefered before private exerciſes. But this I ſay, if it ſhould be your hard lot, after our departure from you, to be deprived of publick Ordinances at home, and to be out of a capacity to enjoy them abroad, then I ſay, you may freely and comfortably cloſe with the adviſe propounded. In this fore-mentioned caſe, let the Bible preach to us, when Miniſters cannot: when we cannot hear *living Prophets*, let *dead Prophets preach to us*; I mean this, ſee what good you can get out of the wholeſome Diſcourſes of God's departed Prophets. Many Miniſters preach by their ſurviving Works, when they themſelves are in their Graves; by their works, *though they be dead, do yet ſpeak*. Let the Bible be your rule, alwayes refer to that, in things to be believed, and in things to be practiſed. Scholars uſe to ſtudy their Rules well, and then they cannot do amiſs.

12. Endeavour to *walk in the Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt*. This was Chriſt's advice to his Diſciples when he was about to leave them, *John* 14.1. *Let not your hearts be troubled. In the world ye ſhall have Tribulation, but be of good Comfort*. As you ſhould be humble in Proſperity, ſo quiet and chearful in Adverſity;

Carry

Carry an even frame in each ſtate; *Let your Moderation be known unto all men, even in bearing Afflictions.* Be not overmuch caſt down with any trouble; Let the Enemy ſee that you *have been with God*, by *the Gladneſs of your Countenance.* You'l diſcredit Religion by too much drooping. Let not others ſay, You ſerve a hard Maſter. God that knows all things, knows what condition is beſt for you, and how to deal with you. Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes. Though Adverſity and the Wicked may intermeddle with your outward comforts, and take them away, yet let them ſee you have inward Joyes, with which they cannot *intermeddle*, nor take away.

13. Eſteem and improve Time as a precious Commodity. Husband Opportunities for Soul-Advantage. When you have ſpare hours, improve them in Reading, Meditation and Prayer. Redeem Time from ſleep, your callings and recreations, in order to Heaven. Men uſually work, ſleep, and recreate more than neceſſity calls for, and then cry out, they have no time for holy Exerciſes. Oh what would damned ſpirits give for two or three of thoſe hours which we throw away! Oh how would they ſpend them! would they ſleep, play, or work them away? Nay, how would they Pray, Read, and Repent more in one hour, than we do in many! Brethren, the *time is ſhort*, your work is *much*, you have *God* to *honour*, your *Relations to watch over*, your own *Evidences to make clear*; O then redeem precious Time, do not throw it away, *Epheſ.* 5. 16.

15. *Contend earneſtly for the Faith*, *Jude* 3. Maintain fundamental Truths; I do not mean that you ſhould fall a wrangling with every one you meet. The Apoſtle indeed takes notice of ſome men that place their Religion in *fightings of Words*, in conflicting with the Air, in janglings and diſputings about things they

underſtand

underſtand not, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5, 6. Some place their Religion in being of this and that Opinion; and indeed they are meer *Opinioniſts*. Our meaning is this, When the Enemies of the Church, labour to root up the *neceſſary* and very *foundation* Truths of Chriſtianity, that we ſhould ſtick to them. As *Paul*, he did earneſtly contend for the Doctrine of Chriſt, being the *Meſſiah*, againſt the *Jews*. He maintained the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* againſt the *Saduces*: The Doctrine of *Juſtification* by *Chriſt's Righteouſneſs*, againſt the *Teachers of the Law*. He doth ſtrongly and vehemently maintain *Divine Worſhip* againſt the *idolatrous worſhip of the* Athenians. And ſo ſhould we contend opportunely and wiſely with tongues and lives. Contend againſt *Juſtification by Works*, againſt Idolatry; rather than God's Honour ſhould be given to dumb Idols, *give your honour to the Duſt*. Conſider, fundamental, yea, every Truth, hath been confirmed by no leſs than Miracles, preſerved in a miraculous way, and ſealed in the Blood both of Chriſt, and of Martyrs. Never then ſell the Truth, but buy it.

16. Get longing Deſires after the Enjoyment of God in Heaven. Let your hearts be often ſending ſighs thither. Long till you be at home. Groan earneſtly till *mortality be clothed with Immortality*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2. Say as he, *When ſhall I come and appear before God?* Long till you be in Heaven, that ſo you may have conſtant Communion with God's Angels and Saints, that ye may be wholly freed from ſin, and made perfect in Holineſs. Let your Converſation be in Heawhilſt you are on Earth. To this end, get more acquaintance with Heaven; Study till you be convinced *that it is*, and *what it is*. Underſtand what that Happineſs is that Saints enjoy there. When you have got *minds informed*, and *hearts affected* with it, often

ten muſe and meditate of it. This heavenly Converſation is very ſweet; it will comfort us when we are never ſo *ſad*. Well, may the ſoul ſay, Now I am full of ſin, O but then no ſin; I am now ſold under ſin, O but then I ſhall be *free*; Now I *diſhonour* God, but then I ſhall *honour* him altogether; Now I am in continual *fear* of falling into ſin, but then I ſhall be paſt all *danger*; Now I am in continual *ſorrow*, but then all *tears ſhall be wip'd away*; Now I am kept in *bondage through fear of death*, but then there ſhall be living, and *no more Death*, and ſo no more fears of it.

Moreover, this would teach us to underſtand the World. When we do experimentally taſte *Heavens Joyes*, we ſhall deſpiſe *Earths Pleaſures*; when we ſeriouſly think of that Friendſhip and Communion we ſhall have with Friends in Heaven, even God, Chriſt, Angels and Saints, it will wean us from Friends on Earth, and make us more willing to leave them. And when we think of Heavens *Honour*, we ſhall undervalue the *honours*, and ſcorn the *contempt* we meet with in this world. Get now and then upon the top of *Piſgah*, and ſolace your ſelves with a view of the *Heavenly Canaan*.

Having now given you an account of thoſe main Duties and Counſels, that relate more immediately to God and your ſouls, I ſhall briefly give you the ſum of thoſe Counſels I have to leave you, about things that relate more nearly to you and others, with whom you converſe and have to do. The firſt is this;

1. *Diſcharge domeſtical Duties.* Study and perform the Duties that every Relation calls for. Act as Chriſtian Parents and Chriſtian Maſters towards your Children and Servants; bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*; call on them to read the Scriptures

Scriptures frequently, that even of Children they be acquainted with that which will make them *wiſe to Salvation*; keep them to a *form* of *ſound words*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. hold them to the Principles of Religion. Catechiſms are called, *A Form of ſound words*, becauſe they *keep the Judgment and Affections ſound*: they help to diſcern betwixt Truth and Error; fit and prepare for hearing of the Word preached, and for the receiving of the Lord's Supper. For want of this, we may obſerve notorious ignorance in grown youth, and old men alſo. For want of this, how many that are *Fathers* in years, are meer *Children in underſtanding!* Again, pray with and for your Children and Servants, and ſet them to pray by themſelves; for this end, give them time convenient; do not ſo much forward them in your ſervice, as to hinder them from ſerving God: your Servants have God to *acknowledge*, *honour* and *ſerve*, as well as you; they have *ſins* to be *pardoned*, *corruptions* to be *ſubdued*, *Graces* to *beg*, *wants* to be *ſupplied*, and *ſouls to be ſaved* as well as you; and will you make them throw their ſouls *over-board* to *ſecure* your *goods*? And ſo ſtudy to carry as Chriſtians in every other Relation. Carry as Chriſtian Husbands and Chriſtian Wives are directed and ought to do, that the Goſpel of Chriſt be not blamed upon your account. And ſo you that are Children and Servants, as you expect your Parents and Maſters ſhould diſcharge their duties towards you, ſo it is expected you ſhould conſcienciouſly diſcharge duties towards them: See your duty, in *Epheſ.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. and practiſe it.

2. *Live in Love.* This was Chriſt's Command to his Diſciples when he left them, *John* 13. 34, 35. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that you love one another. By this ſhall all men know ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another. Hate not any of your Brethren in your*

heart. Hatred makes us, like the Devil, Murderers. The wicked love one another entirely; and ſhall not Chriſtians much more? The great Exhortation of *John* the Divine was, even when he was ſo old, as he could ſcarce ſay any thing elſe; *Little Children, love one another; little Children love one another.*

3. *Eſteem and maintain Peace among one another, as a precious Jewel.* Beware of Animoſities and Heart-burnings, of Jealouſies and Jarrings one with another. Many evils follow this one of ſtrife; *Jam.* 3. 16. *Where Envying and Strife is, there is every evil work.* It's the nature of Chriſtianity to be meek and peaceable (*ver.* 17.) Strifes are a *work of the fleſh, Gal.* 5. 20. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, Hatred, Variance, Strife.* Now its the property and duty of true Chriſtians, to put off the works of the fleſh. To this end, avoid the occaſions of Strife & Contentions. Put up Injuries, hearken not to Tale-bearers; *The Tale-bearer ſeparateth very Friends*, Prov. 26. 20. But when there *is no Tale-bearer*, the *Strife ceaſeth.*

Moreover, deny your ſelves ſometimes of that which may be your right, that ſo you maintain brotherly Love. Ever ſuſpect your own Judgment; *Man is uſually partial in his own cauſe.* Never think thy ſelf ſo much in the right, but that thou mayeſt ſometimes over-ſhoot thy ſelf, and be in the wrong; *Be not wiſe in thy own conceit.* Conſider, as long as there is Jars and Contentions amongſt Brethren and Neighbours, they are not in a capacity of doing good to, or receiving good from one another. Contentions fill that mind full of Prejudice, and then neither Inſtruction, Advice, Reproof, or any courteſie will be well accepted; but will be in danger of rejection with abundance of contempt. As long as men are prejudiced againſt one another, they will not believe that any good thing done

done by the other, proceeds from a good principle, or hath a good end. In a word, I conclude this, in the words of the Apoſtle, *As much as is poſſible, live peaceably with all men.*

4. *Study to unite*, 1 Cor. 1. 10. Bring your minds to meet in one point. Bring them to the *Center* of God's Word: The wider we go from God's Word, which is the Center of Unity, the further we go from one another. It cannot be expected while the world ſtands, that Chriſtians ſhould agree in every *punctilio*; but labour to meet in the main, meet in the root. The branches of a Tree grow ſeveral ways, and are at a great diſtance from one another, but they all agree in this, that they came from the ſame root. So Chriſtians may in ſome things ſeem to be a great diſtance from each other: O labour to meet in the Root; *agree in Subſtantials; ſtudy the things that make for peace, whereby ye may edifie one another.*

5. *Exhort one another*, Heb. 3. 17. Inſtruct, warn, ſtrengthen, comfort one another; take that advice, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 11. *Comfort your ſelves together, and edifie one another*; do not ſtraggle one from another, run together againſt a ſtorm; be aſſured it is not ſafe for Chriſtians to be alone: two are better than one; if they be together, they ſhall have heat.

6. *Be righteous in all your dealings with each other.* Defraud not one another. Mich. 6. 8. *Deal juſtly; lye not one to another, but ſpeak the Truth.* 1 Cor. 6. 9. *The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* In buying and ſelling, and all your civil contracts, *do as you would others ſhould do unto you*; ſet your ſelf in the *buyers ſtead*, and ſee how you would have others act towards you, and ſo do to them.

7. *Be ſenſible of the loſs, which you and others about you, ſuſtain this day.* Our Church is parting with ma-

ny Miniſters that were willing, and in ſome meaſure able to do God ſervice: Their Iniquities I confeſs, may have a great hand in putting them forth, and I hope they are in ſome meaſure ſenſible of the *Plague of their hearts:* But ſee if your hands have not helpt to lift them out; have not you weakned their hands many a time? It may be you have made them preach and pray weakly and feebly, by your coldneſs and deadneſs: It may be your *barrenneſs* provokes God to take away his *Vine-dreſſers*; your *leaſineſs* might cauſe theſe *Candles* to be taken away. Is not *England* weary of Miniſters? do not we count them *troublers?* Alas, we have raiſed *winds* to *blow* out theſe Candles! And then, as you ſhould be ſenſible of your ſin, ſo of your loſs. Why, what do we loſe this day? We loſe Shepherds, and Sheep are likely to do poorly without; we loſe ſpiritual Fathers: *My Father, My Father!* And how do poor Children cry at the loſs of a Father! We loſe ſome of the Pillars of the Church and Nation. As *David*; *I bear up the Pillars of it.* And how can a Houſe ſtand without Pillars? they are our beſt defence. *The Chariots of Iſrael and the Horſemen thereof*, Cant. 3. 7. they *defend* ſouls againſt Sin and Satan, and bodies from many Judgments. How can a Nation do without Watchmen! It's well if the taking away ſo many Prophets, be not as the pulling ſo many *Lots out of Sodom.*

Object. *But what needs all this? what a needleſs ſtir do you make? Though you and others like you, be ſilenced, yet there are others to ſucceed you, your Places will not be vacant. Do you think there are not as good as your ſelves to ſtay behind? we do not ſee but you may very well be ſpared.*

Anſw. 1. Let it be as you have ſpoken. It is the hearty deſire of our ſouls, that better may ſucceed us; it would much elevate our ſouls if it might be ſo.

2. Suppoſe

2. Suppoſe there may ſome holy and painful Labourers ſtay behind, its to be thought it will be *but ſome*: the *Harveſt is great*, and it is not reaſonably to be imagined that there ſhould be ſuddenly raiſed a competent ſucceſſion of able experienced Paſtors, to ſupply ſo many Congregations as are like to be left deſtitute. It's much to be feared that we ſhall have cauſe to ſit down and weep over many poor Towns and Pariſhes, *being left as Sheep without Shepherds.*

3. Are you ſure that thoſe that ſtay behind us ſhall continue long amongſt you? How do you know but that within ſome months or a few years, ſome ſtumbling-block or other may be laid in their way, over which they cannot poſſibly go, if they will retain a good conſcience?

4. However, this Diſpenſation of God is a wonderful affliction. It is not the *manner of God* ordinarily to deal thus with his Miniſters and People. God doth not uſe to *light Candles* and then to *put* them *under buſhels.* I do not remember that the like ever was heard or read of in *England* before, that ſo many Miniſters ſhould have the doors ſhut upon them, in a time when the Proteſtant Religion is profeſſed and countenanced. In the former times when Prelacy was Tyrannical, though here one, and there one had their mouths ſtopt, ſo that they could not preach in their own places, yet they might preach in another. Extraordinary *Eclipſes* uſually preſage ſome extraordinary *Events*: The Lord alone knows what the the effects of this Great Eclipſe will be. And the rather, this is to be look'd upon as a great affliction, if we conſider, that we cannot tell when, or whether or no, there ſhall be a reſtauration of Paſtors to their People. How many poor People may cry out, as in *Pſal.* 74. 9. *We ſee not our Prophets, neither is there any amongſt us that knoweth*

how long. Well, do but ſee *Acts* 20. 37; 38. and think how many *Pauls* are ſaying to their People this day, Ye may ſee our faces no more; and think how many weeping eyes and ſad hearts there are. Friends weep many times for a *ſhort* parting: when People *are* deprived of their Miniſters, they part with their beſt Friends.

8ly. *Pray for the Faithful Miniſters of God, both thoſe that ſtay behind, and eſpecially for thoſe that are conſtrained to depart.* 1 Theſ. 5. 25. They have prayed for us many a time; *In every prayer of mine, making mention of you all:* They have ſhed many a *tear*, and ſent up many a *ſigh*: They have mourned for your deadneſs and unteachableneſs. They do now eſpecially need your prayers.

1. Pray that God would keep them ſtedfaſt. *They are Leaders of the People*, Pray they *may not cauſe them to erre.* They have many temptations to ſin, they may be in neceſſities, and that is a great temptation.

2. That they may have counſel from God. Both thoſe that ſtay in, and thoſe that go out, may be in the *dark*, as to their own and the Churches affairs; Pray therefore that God's *Urim* may be with them both. Pray that God would diſcover to both ſorts of Miniſters, wherein they are *defective* in any thing that might or ſhould be done, and wherein either of them have *exceeded*; that knowing their error they may *repent.*

3. For proviſion. Though bread be taken from their mouths, pray God would provide ſome *Obadiahs* that *may feed them, though it be with bread and water.* In *Deut.* 10. 9. we reade, that becauſe *Levi had no inheritance amongſt his brethren, therefore the Lord promiſed to be his inheritance.* The Lord knows that many of *Levi* at this day have little or no inheritance amongſt their brethren, therefore pray that God himſelf would be

their

their inheritance. They are willing to leave *Houſe* and *Land* for *the ſake of Chriſt*, and that they may keep a good and quiet conſcience, O beg that God would not *leave them*. That ſeeing they are deſirous to *honour* God, that of him they may *not be ſlighly eſteemed*.

4. For their return. That you may ſee their faces once more, *Rom.* 1. 10. *That they may have a proſperous journey to you again, if it be the Will of God.* If God delight in us, he can bring his Prieſts into his Temple again; he can bring Miniſters to their People, and People to their Miniſters: O beg that God would ſpeed and haſten the time. Plead with God the honour of his Name, the neceſſity of his Church, and the ſhortneſs of the lives of many of his Miniſters. Many of them are aged, and at the *moſt* their dayes are like to be *few*, and thoſe that are younger, know not how ſoon a period may be put to their lives, O beg that they may not ſtand all their dayes idle. The door is ſhut, and bars are ſet, ſo that they cannot enter into God's Vineyard as formerly; O beg that the Lord would haſten the opening of the doors of the Temple for them, and that he would break theſe bars aſſunder. What the reſolution of God is in this particular, you and I know not, however do you your duty, and perform this office of Love to your Miniſters, and then let both them and you ſit ſtill and acquieſce with the ſame humble reſolution that *David* had, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. *If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord he will bring me again, and ſhew me his habitation: but if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; Lo, here I am, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him.* So if God ſee it good for you and us, he can and will reſtore us to his Houſe again; but if he ſay, he hath no delight in us, behold here we are, let him do to us as ſeemeth good in his eyes. We do acknowledge we are unworthy to

be

be *Priests any longer to him*, and that God can bring about his own glory though we were all really dead; and if God should lay us aside all our life time, as vessels in which he hath no pleasure, we desire to submit.

And now, Brethren, not knowing when, or whether or no, you may see our faces again in a publick manner, I bid you farewel, *Acts* 20. 32. *Commending you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up.* And with the words of the Apostle, in *Heb.* 13. 18, 19, 20. *Pray for us, and the rather, that we may be restored to you the sooner. And the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, make you perfect in every good work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON XVI.

Mr. Robt. Porter. Penbridge. Derbysh.

Zeph. 3. 18.

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn Assemblies, who are of Thee, to whom the Reproach of it was a burden.

THE Prophet *Zephaniah* supposed by some [*Mayer ex Gualth.* cap. 1. v. 1.] as the Prophet *Isaiah* was, of a Family of some Note amongst the *Jews* (some Noble were and are called) propheſied in those times that bordered upon the Captivity, which was *Israels* second *Egypt*; and in regard that the body of the People were in his time corrupt and senseless, he is a *Son of Thunder* unto them: and in that there was in that corrupt body some sound members, a few names that had not defiled their garments, he is *a Son of Consolation to them.* The body of the People would not believe

lieve enough to humble them; nor the Faithful amongſt them take in ſo much as to chear them. The Prophets of thoſe times found it little leſs difficult to prop up good men under their dejections, than to throw down bad men caſtled in their own preſumptions. The moſt were perſwaded that Captivity would never be; and the beſt had much ado to believe it would ever end, as appears by *Jeremiah*'s Purchaſe, *Jer.* 32. 6, 7,—41, 42, 43, 44.

The Text is in the Promiſſory part of this Book. The Prophet aſcends the Mount of Bleſſing at the eighth verſe of this laſt chapter, and thence he uttered theſe words. *Junius* thinks that the *waiting* called for in that verſe, is patiently to bear their Captivity in *Babylon*, and chearfully to expect their Deliverance therefrom; and ſo, then all that follows, is to give them grounds of hope, that it was but a temporary Captivity, not a final Divorſe; they ſhould be in a ſtate of Suſpenſion (as *Abſolom*) from God's preſence for ſome time, but not of *Abdication*, or *Exhæredation*, ſequeſtred, interdicted, not ejected, diſinherited. So much for the Book in which my Text is, and its coherance with the words of its neighbourhood.

In the Text there are two general parts; *(viz.)* Firſt, An *Implicit Prediction* of a doleful Calamity which ſhould befal this People: And, ſecondly, An *Explicit Promiſe* of a Rich Mercy to be beſtowed upon them.

In the *Prediction* implyed, there is a double Calamity intimated to be coming, and that is, firſt, A Loſs of their *Spiritual Priviledges*, which was the Advantage of the *Jew*, *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. & 9. 4, 5. By *Solemn Aſſemblies* are meant their ſeveral Conventions at thoſe ſet times which God had appointed them, *viz.* on the weekly Sabbath, the new Moons, the ſtated Feaſts and Faſts, which they were bound to obſerve, *Deut.* 16. begin.

gin. For the *Solemn Aſſembly*, *i. e.* for the *lack*, *want* of the Solemn Aſſembly. The phraſe is a conciſe form of ſpeech uſual in the *Hebrew* tongue, and is in this Text to be underſtood, as in *Iſa.*32.12. *They ſhall lament for the Teats, for the pleaſant Fields, for the fruitful Vine*, *i. e.* for the *ſpoil*, *loſs*, and *want* of them. Our Tranſlators do ſometimes, where the words are no more in the Original than they are here, ſupply, to ſhew the ſenſe of the expreſſion: One while [*lack*] as in *Gen.*18.28. *Wilt thou deſtroy all the City for* [lack of] *five?* And another while [*want*] as in *Lament.* 4.9. *——ſtricken through for* [want] *of the fruits of the field.* And ſo it would have done well if it had been ſupplied here. Furthermore, in that it is here expreſſed indifinitely, *The Solemn Aſſembly*, it is to be underſtood univerſally of *All* Aſſemblies: ſo that it was a *total deprivation*, they had not one left.

Secondly, The *Reproach* under which their *Aſſemblies* lay, as *under a burden*, as our Tranſlators put into the margent: Which was an additional aggravation of their Affliction, adding Gall to their Wormwood. *Harm* and *Scorn* are ſeldom divided. The Church is ſeldom laid low, but it is ſpit upon as well as trod upon. If *Sampſon* be in the *Philiſtines* hands, he muſt be brought forth to make them ſport. And this is very irkſome. Shame is the heavieſt part of a croſs; *Heb.* 12.2. & 13.13. If God had only ſtripped them of their Glory, it might have been eaſier born, than to have their *Glory* turned into *Shame*. If they had only wanted *good words* from God, that ſometimes they had heard, it might have been born; but to hear *evil words* from men, yea, to hear the *good wayes* of God *evil ſpoken of*, this was intolerable. The *Reproaches* what they were, you will hear anon. So much ſhall ſerve for the *Prediction* implied.

I pro-

I proceed to the ſecond general in the Text, (*viz.*) *The Promiſe expreſſed.* And therein is conſiderable, 1. The Promiſe it ſelf, *I will gather*, *i. e.* bring you to your Land, and to your Aſſemblies again, to enjoy them in more peace, power, and purity than formerly, as the precedent verſes, and ſome other paralel Scriptures (which will be touched on by and by) do ſhew. 2. The perſons to whom this Promiſe belongs. [The Promiſe, as other parts of the Word, is to be divided, not thrown about careleſly; it is childrens bread, and ſo not for dogs.] Now the perſons that are intereſted in this Promiſe are deſcribed, 1. Generally ſuch as are of the Church, —*who are of Thee:* but becauſe deceit lies in Generals; the Church doors are far wider than Heaven gates: *All are not Iſrael that are of Iſrael*, Rom. 9.6. Therefore (2dly.) more particularly, They are characterized by their carriage under the Calamities mentioned (*viz.*) Their ſad reſentment of thoſe Calamities; they were ſad loſſes to them, they took them to heart; they wept under their Loſs, and groaned under the Reproach.

—*That are ſorrowful for the Solemn Aſſembly, &c.* I thought ſome years ſince I had a call to ſpeak to the latter part of this Text, and did ſo— I wiſh I could ſay, I have no cauſe now to call my thoughts to the firſt words of this Text, upon which I do intend now to inſiſt, and the Doctrine is this.

Doct. 1. *The want of Solemn Aſſemblies is a Lamentation, and ſhould be for a Lamentation to all Church-members.*

Ordinances ſhould not be parted with with dry eyes. The Child ſurely is either very ſullen, or very ſick, that cryes not for the breaſt.

The Doctrinal part requires an *Anſwer* to two *Queſtions*,

ſtions, and then the way is open for Application.

The firſt *Queſtion* is, *What it is to be ſorrowful for the want of Solemn Aſſemblies.* And the ſecond *Queſtion* is, *Why Church-members ſhould be ſorrowful for their want of them.*

Queſt. 1. *What it is to be ſorrowful, &c.*

I *anſwer*, It conſiſts in two things. 1. It is inwardly to lay this to heart, as a very great and a grievous want and loſs. If even bad men will, like dogs, howl under the want of Corn and Wine, *Hoſ.7.* 14. ſhould not the Lord's Children mourn under the want of Spiritual Bread, and their better Refreſhings? If ever we will have a ſpirit of heavineſs, ſure it muſt be when God brings a Judgment upon us, ſo near to a Spiritual Judgment: Next to the withdrawment of Grace, ſurely is the removal of the Means of Grace. *Artaxerxes* concluded that *Nehemiah* had ſorrow of heart, *Nehem.*2. 2. and indeed ſo he had. The heart muſt cry in ſuch a caſe as this, *Lam.* 2. 18. We muſt be both ſerious and ſincere. Here is no room left for Crokadiles tears; We muſt not be ſuch mourners as *Iſhmael*, but rather ſuch as they in the verſe fore-going. *Jer.* 41. 5, 6. *Our bowels, our bowels ſhould be troubled, we ſhould be pained to the heart*; as Chriſt was when he beheld the Shepherdleſs People, *Matt.*9.36. How oft in the Book of *Lamentations* doth the Prophet touch upon this, as *the Lamentation?* It is (as I may ſay) *The Lamentation of that Book of Lamentations*; it is the burden of that *doleful ditty*, as you may obſerve in reading of it. *Eli* held up, till the Taking of the Ark was mentioned, 1 *Sam.* 4. 18. but when that is mentioned, his heart dies within him; this put him into an extaſie of grief, and overwhelms him; every word that that Meſſenger brought made his heart-ſtrings no doubt to crack, but mentioning the *Ark*, that broke his

his heart: It may be eaſily believed, that his heart was broke with the Arks captivity, before his neck was by his fall off his Seat.

2. It is outwardly to expreſs this inward Grief, and that ſome ſuch wayes as theſe.— *Firſt*, In keeping Faſts; eſpecially making the dayes on which ſuch a ſad Calamity befals us, Faſting-dayes. As this People did, *Zech.* 7. 3. compare *Jer.* 52. 12. The Faſt of the fifth Month, was for the burning of the Temple, which with their ſolemn Aſſemblies were all conſumed and buryed in its Aſhes.— *Secondly*, In abandoning, or at leaſt very much abating Joy in many other things, continued to us during the continuance of this Cauſe of Sorrow. *Nehemiah* (though a chearful man) droops, and cannot be chearful as formerly, *Nehem.* 2. 1,2. he is heart-ſtruck with the Churches condition, and hath little joy in his own preferment; a Prince's ſmile will not chear him, whilſt God frowns on his People. *Uriah* will not enjoy honeſt and lawful delight, whilſt the Ark is hazarded, 2 *Sam.* 11. 11. He that denies proffered delights, becauſe the Ark is but hazarded, how would he have diſdained, if not abominated ſuch a Proffer, if the Ark had been captivated? The Wife of *Phinehas* ſets not her heart on the Tydings of a Male-child when the Ark is taken, 1 *Sam.* 4. 21, 22. There is little Joy in Children, when we ſuſpect whether we ſhall leave them a Goſpel or no: We may write *Ichabod* upon the Children born in our houſes in a time when God ſeems to be breaking up houſe amongſt us. Oh who can tell what a want, the want of Chriſt's School of Ordinances is to poor Children! — *Thirdly*, Mentioning not, or at leaſt not accounting our own loſſes that do accompany this (for ſuch Calamities ſeldom come alone) comparable to, or worthy to be named with this Loſs. You may ſee the frame

of

of this Prophets Spirit, *Pſal.* 137. *totum.* They cannot joy, no; though in *Babylon* they were ſeated in a fruitfoyl, by the waters ſide, but there they weep: And what is it for? it is for *Zion*; no doubt but they had many a doleful thing to remember beſide *Zion* and her concernments; much Spoile and Cruelty: The Famine that would fill them with many ſad thoughts, and the Sword and its Executions would mind them of grievous things; but it is *Zion* that makes their heart bleed. As this is their chief Joy, ſo this is their chief Sorrow. They did not ſo much miſs the Comforts of their native Country, as *Jeruſalem*, Oh that City of their Solemnities, Oh *Jeruſalem* they cannot forget! *David* in his Exile, wanted many things beſides the Courts of the Lord, but he ſpeaks as if he wanted nothing but them, nothing as them: He breathes not after *Sauls* court, but after God's Court. Some upon the 84th *Pſalm*, and the 4th verſe, do leave out the ſupplement [*Even*] that is in our Tranſlation, and reade it as an abrupt and pathetical Exclamation; thus, *Thine Altars, O Lord of Hoſts! q. d.* Oh for *thine Altars* (O my God) when and where ſhall I be ſo happy, *Thine Altars, thine Altars!* The Birds they have Neſts where to lay their Young; they have what is agreeable to their nature, need and refreſhings; Oh why have I not where to lay my head! Oh why am I kept from my Reſting place! *David* in his Exile, ſeeing the Birds come and go to their Neſts, like a paſſionate Lover, he takes occaſion thence to bewaile his ſad lot.

Speed, in the Life of Qu. *Mary.*

As ſometimes Queen *Elizabeth* did in her Reſtraints, upon the ſight of the Milk-maid out of her Priſon Windows, whoſe merry ſinging over her Pail, put her into a penſive dump, preferring a poor liberty before her Princely Captivity. So that the

the words are, an holy piece of Poetry, expreſſing ſo zealous an Affection to the Ordinances, that turned every thing it met with, either into Fewel, or Bellows. — *Fourthly*, Lamenting after the Lord, during the time of this Sequeſtration on us for our Delinquencies, until the Lord take it off, and put us into poſſeſſion of theſe dear Liberties, and precious Priviledges. One of the Daughters of godly Sorrow, is vehement deſire. As in the Creation, out of the Waters were formed the winged Fowls, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. And hence comes a ſickneſs of heart until the Mercy deſired be obtained. No Mercy that is on this ſide Chriſt and Grace, more panted after. This is that which *David* will ſeek after, *Pſal.* 27. 4. this is that he thirſts for and longs for, that he may ſee God's Power and Glory, as he had ſeen him in the Sanctuary, *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2. Oh that I may but behold thoſe glorious Ordinances! If it had not been for hopes of Reſtitution, his heart would have fallen into a deadly ſwond, *Pſal.* 27. 13. You find the People, 1 *Sam.* 7. 2. lamenting after the Lord. We ſhould lye in Tears whilſt the Church lyes in its Ruines. It is *Junius* his note upon the Text — *Pios, qui tanto ſtudio conventus ſacri conſtringuntur, ut tantiſper dum a Deo abſunt ſint in mœrore & luctu* — The Spirit of a good man under ſuch a want, ſhould be like that of *Mephiboſheth* in *Davids* abſence, 2 *Sam.* 19. 24. Whilſt *David* was driven out, he hath no mind of himſelf, nor of any thing he hath: And when *David* is returned, he is ſo full of that, that he cares not if he hath nothing elſe. Surely brown bread and Goſpel is good fare; and a ſhort allowance of Temporals will ſerve, if God will reſtore and mend our ſpiritual Paſtures, *Iſa.* 30. 20. And thus much of the firſt Queſtion. The ſecond follows, which is;

2. Quest.— *Why should Church Members be sorrowful for the want of them?*

Answ. The Text shall answer this Question, that so I may at once more fully explain the Text, and confirm the Doctrine; and before I give the Reasons that are couched in the Text, I shall only premise this, That I take it for granted, that by Solemn Assemblies, are meant all the Appendices of them; and takes in the want of the Word, Worship, Ministry and Ordinances; which things do make them sacred, and in a peculiar manner solemn Assemblies. This premised, I come to the first Reason.

Reas. 1. Because they are *Solemn Assemblies*; *i. e.* Holy Meetings for high and great Ends.—The Testification of our duty in our attendance upon, and approaches to his Majesty; and the Communication of his Grace, Mercy and Goodness, so that in losing them, we are prevented from doing that which is the main end of our being, and are interrupted in the enjoying of that which is the means of our present and future well-being. But because it is particulars that do affect, *singularia pungunt*, I shall a little open this Loss in two particulars — *First*, In the want of Assemblies, we want the Publick Worship. — And, *Secondly*, We want the things to be enjoyed in Publick Worship, and to be received in it.— 1. In the want of the Solemn Assemblies, we want Publick Worship; there the People are (*Psal.* 102. 21,22.) gathered together to serve the Lord. The service of God is reckoned among the Jews Priviledges, *Rom.* 9. 4. Publick Worship is one of the Jewels in the Jews Cabinet.— *First*, Publick Worship is that which God loves: and that God hath wrought in all his People a love to above Private Worship.— *He loves it*, Psal. 87. 2. He loves the dwellings of *Jacob*, but especially

ſy the Gates of *Zion*. He will meet his People in ſecret; but he hath made a more peculiar Promiſe to meet them in their Meetings, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Exod.* 29. 42. Private Duties want not a bleſſing; but Publick Worſhip is honoured by God to be the main Conveiance of Bleſſings. Publick Ordinances are the great Veins wherein the Blood of Chriſt runs, *Pſal.* 128.5. *Pſal.* 133.3. The Mount of *Zion* is the Mount of bleſſing. The Gleanings of Ordinances are better than the Vintage of other Helps. There he commanded the Bleſſing. 1. There is Conviction, 1 *Cor.* 14.23,24. 2. There is Converſion, *Rom.* 10.14. Private Means want not their Encouragements; but God ſets the moſt ſeals to his Publick Worſhip. Hearing is not the only way, but it is the moſt ordinary way of Faith. God's chief Doles are at Wiſdoms Gates. *Pſal.* 87.5. *Of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, This and that man was born*; I may ſay, new born there. Theſe are, as it were, the troughs (as once *Jacob* did) wherein God layes the Rod of his Strength, and transforms hearts.— 3. There is Conſolation. The Ordinances are the breaſts of Conſolation, *Iſa.* 66.11. There in the Banqueting-Houſe God ſtayes his with Flagons, and comforts them with Apples; as in *Cant.* 2.4,5. There God puts the teat into the mouth, and ſtills the Whimperings of his Children. The Comforts that are given in Aſſemblies, are moſt ſatisfactory; as things done in open Court, are moſt Authentick. *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1.18. *went away, and her countenance was no more ſad.*— 4. There God carries on his work begun. God feeds his People where he breeds them: gives them Strength where he gave them Life, *Pſal.* 84. 7. Growth where he gave them truth of Grace. *Pſal.* 92. 13. To talk of over-thriving Ordinances, is a miſtake: 'Tis decay, not thrift; 'tis death, not growth. We muſt be, and may

learn in Christ's School, till we be sent to the Universi-ty of Heaven.—*Secondly*, And as God loves it, and hath set his Broad-Seal to it, so God hath wrought in his People a Love to it. God's People cannot live without Secret Corners, nor comfortably without Publick Meetings: if they be cooped up at any time, they are as a Child in the wombe, strugling to get forth. *Hezekiah* was more loth to leave Worship, than to leave the world: He mentions his (*Isa.* 38.11.) loss of Converses with Men, but not so emphatical as the other; as you may observe; *I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord*: He redoubles the word [*Lord*] to express his ardent Affections to God's Service, and to intimate his desire of life, that he might go to Church again. Reade ver. 22. of that Chapter. Now can we part with such a *Dorcas* for good deeds, and such a *Jonathan* for pleasantness without sorrow? Can we suffer such a Right-hand to be cut off? such a Right-eye to be plucked out without grief? Shall such a Darling-Blessing dye unlamented? *Thirdly*, As Publick Worship is in the Heart of God, and in the hearts of his People, so Publick Worship is that which all need, be their personal Abilities, be their private Helps what they will. (1.) All need it. Publick Worship is a publick Good; and so a publick general Loss; our persons, our families will feel it; it will be soon every where in a little time. The Publick Worship is like Husbandry, of which it is said, *The profit of the Earth is for all*. The King himself is served by the field, *Eccles.* 10.9. 'Tis well noted, That the Ministry of the Word, or rather the Ministers of the Word, are set forth by common Blessings, such as are Light, and Salt, and Harvest-men, Bread; so that the removal of such away, is a common Mischief: it is as if no Sun, no Tillage, no Labourers to reap down our Fields: It is like the bellies want

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in the *Apologue*, no member can do its office. The Miniſter himſelf will want this Mercy. The Light is profitable to him that carrieth it, as well as to others. They may in ſaving their Hearers, ſave themſelves, 1 *Tim.*4.16.

But Oh how will all ſorts of People want it! *Solemn Aſſemblies* are the great Banks againſt Sin, the main Quickners to Duty. Miniſters are both God's and mans Remembrancers, *Iſa.*62.6. 2 *Pet.*1.12,13. The want of them turns our Palaces into Hell for Darkneſs and Prophaneſs, as *Egypt* was when it wanted Light. *Solemn Aſſemblies* are the Directors of all ſorts to their duties. How ſoon ſhall we find this want in our Children, and in our Servants, nay in our ſelves: We that have had ſo much a do to get or keep any life or ſence, what ſhall we do when we want thoſe Rubbings, Chafings, Joggs, Wheels, Quicknings, that we have had in the publick Ordinances?

Read and apply to this preſent purpoſe, that ſpeech which your dying, dead Miniſters may uſe to you, *Deut.* 31.27. *Mutatis mutandis*. *For I know thy Rebellion and thy Stiff-neck: Behold whilſt I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious againſt the Lord: and how much more after my death?* Nay, Furthermore, I ſay it is that which all need, be their perſonal Abilities never ſo great, and be their private helps never ſo many. It is a choice obſervation of a Man of God, now with God, a Man mighty in the Scriptures, concerning *David*, that though he was a Man of Excellent Gifts, a Prophet, a Pen-man of Scripture: You have his Character and Portraiture, in 2 *Sam.* 23. 1,2. A man of incomparable Abilities, vaſt Experiences, ſingular Integrity, *A man after God's own heart*; and yet this man was a lover of the Habitation of God's Houſe, *Pſal.* 26.8.

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268. Nay, beſides theſe his own treaſures, he had with him ſometimes, if not alwayes, an extraordinary Prophet to be his Chaplain, even *Gad*, 1 *Sam.* 22. 5. And he had likewiſe *Abiathar* a Prieſt, to enquire of God for him, 1 *Sam.*23.9. Yet he longs after the Ordinances; bewails the want of Publick Worſhip; and ſpeaks as if he wanted God, in many *Pſalms*, as if he had nothing of God comparatively to what he enjoyed there. Oh who like *David!* Great men that have much within themſelves, yet cannot quite keep off the Markets. Verily the beſt ſtored heart or houſe will not live fully without theſe ſpiritual Markets. All private helps may ſay to the publick Ordinances, as *Gideon* to the men of *Ephraim*, *Judg.*8.2. *What have I done in compariſon of you?* Lay all this together: ſtrike theſe conſiderations on the heart, as *Moſes* did the Rock with his Rod; and conclude the heart is a Rock indeed, if it yeeld no water after theſe ſtrokes. Oh if any thing ſhould open ſprings of ſorrow in the heart, it ſhould be the ſtopping up of ſuch Wells. But I ſtay too long upon things. I proceed to the ſecond Particular, that ſheweth how conſiderable the Loſs of *Solemn Aſſemblies* are; and that is,

Secondly, In wanting the *Solemn Aſſemblies*, we want the things to be enjoyed, done, received in the Publick Worſhip. Oh the Bleſſing that is in this cluſter! ſurely a cluſter of Bleſſings; It is a Mercy that comes not alone, nor goes away alone: We may ſay of theſe Mercies when they come, as ſhe of *Gad*, *Behold a Troop!* and when they go, Oh how much do they carry away! As to inſtance, (1.) In the want of them, we want our deareſt Enjoyments—ſuch as are; 1. The gracious Preſence and Viſits of the God of Heaven; the Day of our Viſitation ſets with them, *Luke* 19. 42, 44. The Publick Aſſemblies are God's Chamber

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of Preſence. *Cain* going from that quarter of the World where God had his Church, is ſaid to go *from the Preſence of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 14, 16. Is it nothing to be without God in the World? Is it nothing to be deprived of the ſight of his Goings in the Sanctuary? Is it nothing to want his Walks amongſt his Candleſticks? Seemeth it a ſmall thing to us to ſtand under Suſpenſion? Did *Mary* weep when ſhe ſuppoſed they had taken away her Lord? *John* 20. 13. and ſhall not we when our Lord is clearly withdrawing himſelf? Will a departing God fetch never a tear? *Depart from me* will make weeping, wailing and gnaſhing of teeth; and that thou maiſt fear, ſince the Departures of a God do not affect thee. 2. Open Viſion, and the benefit of the Gifts of God's Miniſters, whom God hath endued with Gifts to profit withal, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, for the perfecting of the Saints. *Solemn Aſſemblies* are the Orbs wherein theſe Stars ſhine, they are the Candle-ſticks in which theſe Lights are ſet up. When the Ark was taken, the Prieſts fell too. When we want our Signs, we want our Prophets too. When no *Solemn Aſſemblies*, then are our Teachers driven into Corners. Some have thought it more elegible to loſe the Sun, than theſe Stars. Is it a matter to be paſſed by without Regard, to ſee Lights put under Buſhels; to loſe the Treaſure that is in theſe Earthen-veſſels; to loſe ſo many faithful Guides that were as Eyes to us in the Wilderneſs of this world? Oh to want their Counſels, their Comforts, the Fruit of their Studies, Temptations, Intelligence from Heaven. The beautiful feet of them that publiſh glad Tydings turned from us, calls for ſad hearts; when we cannot hear the joyful Sound; let both God and man hear ſorrowful ſighs and groans. Reade *Acts* 20. 36, 37, 38. People know little of the Reality of ſpiritual

Relations, whose hearts are not touched with the sense of spiritual breaches. Read and apply to this head, *1 Sam.* 3. 1. *Psal.* 74. 9. 3. The Communion of Saints, which is the neareſt reſemblance of Heaven that is upon Earth. When *Aſſemblies* are gone, then the Sheep are ſcattered. Oh how many times do God's People experience warmth by the affections of others! What will the coals do, when they are pulled one from another? Oh what is it to want thoſe glad-ſome Calls! *Let us go up to the Houſe of the Lord; come, let us go to the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe.* Oh to want opportunities to unite our ſtrength in prayer, to gather about God, and beſiege Heaven, and make a common cry, *Father, pitty; Father, help!* Single Prayers are heard, but bands of Prayers, vollies of Prayers, theſe have the honour to prevail with Heaven. God ſhews his Condeſcentions to his People when they twiſt their Prayers, and with one conſent ſtir up themſelves to take hold on him, and hang upon him. Chriſtians have great need one of another, as the members of the body have of each other; and except there be an increaſe of influences from him, that is inſtead of all, we ſhall be very poor and weak, and unfit for our duties when we want the ſupply of the joynts. God's Plants are quite different from other plants; for God's Plants thrive beſt when they are the neareſt together. Oh this true good Fellowſhip! what a ſad world is it when it is broken up! Read *Eccleſ.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. eſpecially *Pſal.* 42. 4. In that *Pſal.* 42. 4. you may ſee what our frame ought to be under this Loſs; *When I remember theſe things, I pour out my ſoul in me, for I had gone with the Multitude, I went with them to the Houſe of God with the Voice of Joy and Praiſe, with a Multitude that kept Holy-day.*

4. A ſpecial and main help of the Sanctification of the

the Lord's Day. The ſeventh day is the Sabbath of reſt, an holy Convocation, *Lev.* 23. 3. the Sabbath is the Meeting day for God's People, Meeting to Hear, to Pray, to Praiſe, to receive the Supper; truly, if there be no holy Convocation, it will ſcarce be an holy Reſt; if no holy Aſſemblies, there will be many ſinful Aſſemblies, there will be Aſſembling by Troops in other houſes: there will be routs of *Sporters* [and ſurely it is no leſs dangerous to ſport upon God's holy time, than to play and ſport with holy things] if no Aſſemblies: Let Aſſemblies go, and God's holy Reſt will be troubled and not ſanctified; Sabbaths will not be known, they will be forgotten: when People have no Sabbath-journeys to go, *viz.* no Ark, no Tabernacle to go to, they will even have ſome week-day journey to go on that Day. High-wayes on that Day will ſoon be occupied, when the Ways of *Zion* mourn. And doth not that loſs cal for tears, that makes way for the breach of a Commandment, at which Religion in its Power and Peace will go out? Reade *Jer.* 17. from ver. 19. to the end.

(2.) In the want of *Aſſemblies*, we want our higheſt imployments, we are taken off from Angelical work, *Nehem.* 9. 6. *The Hoſt of Heaven worſhippeth thee.* From work that is at once our Duty and our Honour, our Holineſs and our Happineſs. They are truly called Priviledges, *Pſal.* 65. 4. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach to thee.* (1.) In theſe *Solemn Aſſemblies* the ſtanding Imployment of Chriſtians is moſt gratefully performed: Such as are Prayer and Praiſe, and the like; for Prayer ſomthing hath been hinted, and for Praiſe, (like Muſick) it is moſt melodious when in conſort. *Pſal.* 107. 32. *Let them Exalt him alſo in the Congregation of the People, and Praiſe him in the Aſſembly of the Elders*, Pſal. 111.

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1. *I will Praiſe thee, Lord, with my whole heart, in the Aſſembly of the Upright, and in the Congregation.* There is a ſweet ſavour goes up to Heaven with Prayers and Praiſes that come from *Aſſemblies*; as ſeems to be hinted in that expreſſion, in *Amos.* 5. 21. *I will not ſmell in your Solemn Aſſemblies.* God is fallen out with a People, when he cannot away with their calling of *Aſſemblies*; and the *Solemn Meeting* is a *grievance*, as ſome reade that Text, *Iſa.* 1. 13.— (2.) In theſe *Solemn Aſſemblies* the extraordinary imployment of Chriſtians is moſt acceptable, ſuch as is Faſting and Prayer, not to mention holy Feaſting & Thankſgiving. Prayers in *Aſſemblies* help at dead lifts, and in extraordinary caſes. *Samuel* will have *Iſrael* gathered to *Miſpah* when he prayes for them, 1 *Sam* 7. 5. *Gather your ſelves together*, &c. Zeph. 2. 1. *Sanctifie a Faſt, Call a Solemn Aſſemblie*, Joel 2. 14. Chriſt gives order to his Diſciples to continue together embodied, ſending out their Supplications, *Acts* 1. 4, 14. and you ſee the Spirit came down upon them when aſſembled, *Acts* 2. 1, 2. The Law was given upon the day of the Aſſemblie, *Deut.* 9. 10. *and* 10.4. *and* 18. 16. *Peter* was thrown into a Meeting, though a private Meeting, *Acts* 12. 11. God gives his ſpecial Boons of Favour to his People in *Aſſemblies*. (3.) In theſe *Solemn Aſſemblies* it is that men are ſet on work: The Goſpel, like the riſing Sun, it calls up men to work; men cannot be at reſt in their ſloth where God hath his Labourers: Light if it be not powerful enough to direct, it will afflict; if it do not awaken them, it will trouble their reſt: The Witneſſes are Tormenters, where they are not Saviours: but now when the light is gone, then may the People keep holy-day, as ſome render that Text, *Feriabitur Populus, Where no Viſion is*, *Prov.* 29. 18. Markets will be full of perſons

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ſtanding idle at all hours, becauſe there is none to hire them. Now ſhould not this adde weight to ſuch a croſs as this, to make it break our hearts? Did the Silver-Smiths make ſuch a cry, when they thought ere long they ſhould have no work? *Acts* 19. 25, 26, 28. And ſhall the loſs of Spiritual Imployments be over looked?

(3.) In the want of *Aſſemblies* we are deprived of our moſt cheering refreſhments. This loſs draws our Table, empties our Cup, burns up our Paſtures, ſtops our Wells, dries up our freſh Springs. There is a fatneſs in God's Houſe, *There are Rivers of Pleaſures*, Pſal. 36. 8. *David* calls the Altar of God his exceeding joy, *Pſal.* 43. 3, 4. It is in the Houſe of Prayer that God makes his People joyful, *Iſa.* 56. 7, 8. there God makes his People not only to eat, but makes them feaſts of fat things, *Iſa.* 25. 6. O what a Feaſt of fat things is the Supper of the Lord, wherein we have opportunity to thruſt our hands into the Side of Chriſt, to feel what work ſin hath made there, and what a warm Heart he hath, and full of good-will to ſinners! O what a want of thoſe comfortable *Innes* (as I may call them) and refreſhing baiting Places in Heavens Road, that have been to us, as *Bethel* was to *Jacob!* All that is left, when our *Aſſemblies* are gone, is uncomfortable: when *Nebuzaradan* burnt the Temple, he left, but it was but the poor of the Land; ſo when God takes down his Tent amongſt us, there may be ſome Mercies left behind, but they are but poor things; all that is in our houſes is but lean, when we want the fatneſs of God's Houſe, all that we ſee is uncomfortable, when we cannot ſee our ſigns; they are but ſhadows of Mercies, that remain when our ſigns are gone; fulneſs of bread and ſcarcity of the Word hath little ſatisfaction in it; for when the Ordinances go, the ſatifying and ſanctifying

fying Mercies are gone: brown Bread and Goſpel is better fare, than Dainties and no Goſpel. This want turns our Wine into water, and our Bread into ſtones. What is a well-furniſhed houſe without windows and light? what is a ceiled houſe if Gods Houſe lie waſte? what are garners full of all manner of ſtore, if we have not the treaſure that is in earthen veſſels? *Happy is that People whoſe God is the* LORD, Pſal. 144. 12, 13, 14. Now where God is a Peoples God, He will ſet his Sanctuary in the midſt of them, *and his Tabernacle ſhall be with them*, as in *Ezek.* 37. 26, 27. We are as it were without God, if without the Ordinances of God:— Ordinances are as it were the life of a Land; the Land of *Canaan* is in an eſpecial manner in Scripture called the Land of the living, (as ſome think) in regard of the Ordinances. *Moller* on *Pſal.* 27. 13. A Land dyes when the Ordinances go, the ſoul of a Kingdom is gone, the People live as it were among the Tombs; and ſhould not this make our houſes, houſes of mourning? What a cry in *Egypt*, when death was in every houſe? Should not the Mourners go about the ſtreets when the Life of our lives is gone? ſhould the Word of Life depart unlamented?

(4.) In the want of *Aſſemblies* we are deprived of our richeſt Ornaments: Theſe are our Crowns, *Rev.* 12. 1. *Lam.* 5. 16. *The Crown is fallen from our head.* We may in this caſe ſay as *Job*, Chap. 19. 9. *Thou haſt ſtripped me of my glory, and taken my Crown from off my head.* The Ark is called the glory of *Iſrael*; and the ſame thing is called *Glory* and *Aſſembly*, *Iſa.* 4. 5. Good Order (which is a beautiful thing) will not long ſtay after God's Ordinances are gone; Church and State (like thoſe Twins) laugh and cry, live and dye together. Righteouſneſs (which exalts a Nation) is at the threſhold, when Religion is out of doors: Civil

vil Assemblies will cease to be Thrones of Judgment, when *Solemn Assemblies* cease to be Thrones of Glory: The custome of *England* hath made the way to the Bench by the Church; that they that are to give charges to men, may first receive their charge from God. It was at *Jerusalem*, where the Temple was, that the Thrones of Judgment were, *Psal.* 122. 5. It is the Grace of God bringing Salvation, that teacheth men Piety, Sobriety, and Righteousness: What can be expected when that disappeares, but impiety, intemprance, and unrighteousness, 2 *Tit.* 11, 12. Now, cannot a Maid forget her Ornaments, and can we forget ours? When God hath made us *naked*, as the margent in your Bibles renders the word, *Prov.* 29. 18. should we not put on sackcloth?

And lastly I may adde, We with them lose our strongest Muniments. The Ark was strength, *Psal.* 78. 61. 1 *Chron.* 16. 11. *God is terrible out of his holy Places*, Psal. 68. 35. When our Ordinances are gone we are as *Sampson* with his locks cut, even weak as others. The Christian Regiments that could joyn in Prayer, that were a Church as well as a Band, they were called *Thundring Regiments*. How may it be said of Assemblies, as of *Zion* in *Psal.* 76. 3. *There brake he the Arrows of the Bow, the Shield, and the Sword, and the Battel.* It was *Moses* hands that beat the *Amalakites*. We may cry after the Solemn Assemblies when they are going, as *Elisha* after *Elijah*, *My Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.* There is a Defence upon Assemblies, and with *them* that goes. There are not a few places to be found that have soon tumbled into their graves after the removal of their Ministers by death: as *Hippo*, and *Heidelberg*, *&c.* Is the bough cutting on which we stand? is our Defence departing from us, and shall not we mourn?

mourn? Thus much of this Reaſon. Now caſt up all this together, and ſee whether the ſum that ſtands at the foot ſhould not be written with tears.

Reaſ. 2. Becauſe Reproach is the attendant of this Affliction. The Churches *Lamentation* is ſome mens *Jubilee: Iſrael* is a deriſion to *Moab*, and they even skip for joy, *Jer.*48.26. Enemies at ſuch time are either *Rabſhakahs* or *Iſhmaels*. God's People are at ſuch times much laſhed with the ſcourge of tongues. When *David* is forced to leave *Jeruſalem*, then comes out *Shimei* with his ſtones and curſes, 2 *Sam.* 16. 5. In ſuch a time,

1. The *Maſters of Aſſemblies* are reproached. (So are Miniſters called, *Eccleſ.* 12. 11.) They have ſhot many a keen Arrow of Reproof out of the Bow of Ordinances, and now they ſhall find them ſhot back again in Reproaches. When God's poor Servants are ſilenced, there are many mouths opened againſt them; much trampling upon the dead Lion. Reade *Rev.* 11. 8, 9, 10. where you find the dead Bodies of God's Witneſſes are a ſight that the world can never have enough of; they look upon them with as much content, as ſhe did upon *John Baptiſts* head. *Jeremiah* makes it part of his *Lamentation*, The vengeance, lips, reproach of adverſaries; and that ſitting down and riſing up, he was their Muſick; not a meal but his Head, as it were, was ſerved up; he was their Table-talk, they uſed their teeth in gnaſhing upon him as well as grinding their meat. Reade *Lam.* 3. 60, 61, 62, 63. In moſt times the Miniſtry is as the dung-cart, but in ſuch times they are the filth and off-ſcouring eſpecially.

2. The *Members of Aſſemblies*. Deſpiteful minds make them a Deriſion. The *Jews* when this calamity befel them, bore the ſhame of the Heathen, *Ezek.* 36. 4, 5, 6. *Conſider and behold our Reproach*, Lam. 5. 1.

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The holineſs of God's Peoples lives have bitten bad men many a time, and now they will pay them for it in talking to the grief of them whom God hath wounded.

3. The *Exerciſes of the Aſſemblies.* No Veſſels will pleaſe *Belſhazzer* to carouſe in, but the conſecrated Veſſels of God's Temple; no Jeſt in ſuch a time like that which jerks at Religion. *Pſal.* 137. 3. The *Babylonians* would make themſelves merry with one of *Zions* Songs. It was grievous to have a Song required; but ſuch a Song! O this went to their hearts. It may be in ſuch a time the Actions of the Pulpit are brought upon the Stage; this is the Vineger and Gall which the Church hath when it is upon the Croſs.

4. The *Time of Aſſemblies.* Lam. 1. 7. *Her enemies ſaw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths.* They did deride their former obſervation of a Sabbath, and the preſent ceſſation of it, but eſpecially at their former religious obſervation of it, as if it was loſt time. Now, have we at any time ſinned our ſelves into ſuch a condition as makes our enemies laugh, and ſhall not we weep?. Reade *Pſal.* 80. 5, 6. Have we ſo far provoked God to withdraw from us, that enemies have occaſion given them to ſay, *Where is our God?* and ſhould not tears be our meat? ſhould it not be as a ſword in our bones? Reade *Pſal.* 42. 3—10. Pray conſider, Is not Reproach a burden in it ſelf? But further, this Reproach is and hath been moſt burthenſome to God's People, and a mighty breaking to their hearts. Reade when you have leaſure, *Nehem.* 1. 4. & 4. 4. *Pſal.* 69. 19. & 89. 50, 51. & 123. 3, 4. you will find under *this* they have mourned, with *this* their hearts have been broken; *this* they have born in their boſom, and with *this* their ſouls have been exceedingly filled.

And ſurely there is great reaſon it ſhould be ſo: for

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1. the things that they immediatly reproach, are things dear to God, and such in which his Honour is much bound up. God hath three things that are especially dear to him; His *Truth*, his *People*, and his *Worship*; and all these are under such Providences grievously reproached. 2. The strokes that are immediately given them, do ultimately reflect upon God, cast dirt upon him, *Isa.* 52. 5. *My Name is continually every day blasphemed. The Blasphemies against them* (Ezek. 35. 12, 13.) Mountains of *Israel* are called *Boastings* against God, and words against God. 3. These Arrows of Reproach will fall upon mens own head. They now grieve God and his People, but hereafter finally and in the end they will be poor mens shame and confusion: The burden that now lies upon God's Saints, shall rest on the wicked in the end; God will reckon here with them; *They shall bear their shame*, *Ezek.* 36. 6, 7. God answered the reviling Letter from the King of *Assyria* in the blood of his Army; but especially hereafter, *Jude* 15. *He will convince of hard speeches.* He that will not miss an idle word, will surely call to account for bitter Sarcasms, venemous Taunts, and Devil-like Rejoycings in the Afflictions of God's Servants. And so I pass to the third Reason.

Reas. 3. Because this speakes thee to be a true Son of the Church, a living real Member thereof. Thou maist see a Christians face in these waters of sorrow. There is a voice in tears; such tears, they speak to God, and they speak to thee too. *I will gather them that are sorrowful for the Solemn Assembly, who are of thee*—i. e. saith *Junius* on the Text [*Hi sunt tui veri, O Ecclesia, & Germani partus.*] This argues one an Israelite indeed: It is an argument of a very profane heart, to sin away such Mercies, and then to slight what we have done. As *Esau* is called *Profane Esau*, and in this

this he ſhewed it, that when he had ſold his birth-right, he eat and drink, and went his way, *Gen.* 25. 34. To be left of *Aſſemblies*, and left under inſenſibleneſs of it, is compleat Miſery. Can you be born of God, and not lament for theſe teats? Can you be Babes of Grace, and not deſire the ſincere Milk? not cry for your breaſts? This Sorrow is that which tells you, you have got good by the Ordinances whilſt enjoyed. They that ſee no evil in the loſs of them, got little good by the enjoyment of them. Would we know what the Word did whilſt we had it? how do we carry under the want of it? Are we (as *Rachel*) weeping becauſe our *Solemn Aſſemblies* are not? The Godly among the Jews, are deſcribed not only as Mourners in *Zion*, but *Mourners for Zion*, *Iſa.* 61. 3. *Iſa.* 66. 10. Where is your Love to Ordinances if you mourn not? Doth that woman love her Husband that parts with him without a tear? Oh therefore, as even you would approve your ſelves to have gotten Grace under the Means, mourn for the withdrawment of the Means of Grace: By this means, whilſt any of us ſhall want the viſible tokens of God's Preſence amongſt us, we ſhall have an unqueſtionable token of his Preſence in us; We ſhall ſee ſome token for good upon our hearts, whilſt we cannot ſee our ſigns. This Sorrow is (as that of a woman in travel) it hath ſomething of joy in it; It is the mark of a Child of God.

Reaſ. 4. Fourth and laſt Reaſon is, Becauſe God will gather ſuch as are ſorrowful for the *Solemn Aſſemblies*. Which Promiſe hath much in it; 1. Preſervation in diſperſions. God ſets his Mark not only on them that mourn for the evil done in *Sion*, but them alſo that mourn for the evil done to *Sion*. Brine preſerves meat. God keeps his People in briniſh, ſalt tears. There were many that lived to ſee the Tem-

ple ruined, and repaired, as you see in *Ezra.3.11.* but it appears by their tears and weeping, that they had their hearts much upon the former Temple, and it upon their hearts; not as if all the mourners were preserved, but many mourners were, and none but such have any ground to expect it. 2. It notes Restauration after their Dispersions. 1. They shall meet in their own place and places again: No matter how far removed, though cast out to the uttermost part of Heaven, God will gather thence; *Nehem.* 1.9. *He will bring them from the East, and gather them from the West; he will say to the North, Give up, &c. Isa.* 43.5,6. No matter who lies in the way, nor how strong they are that holds them, *Jer.* 31. 10,11. *He that scattereth Israel, will gather, and ransome him from the hand of him that is mightier than he.* 2. They shall meet in their *Solemn Assemblies* again. *I will gather and bring to their Folds,* Jer.23.4. *I will feed them upon the Mountains of Israel in a good and fat Pasture,* Ezek.34.12,13,14. *God will build Jerusalem, and gather together the Out-casts of Israel, Psal.*147.2. They shall take down their Harps, and have a naile in God's holy place. 3. Nay, this Gathering implies some Restitution for the losses of their Mercies. *I will settle you after your old Estate, and do better to you than at the beginning,* Ezek. 36. 11. As (1.) There shall be more purity in Ordinances than formerly. *They shall not defile themselves any more with their Idols, nor detestable things,* Ezek.37.23. & 11.16, 17,18. (2.) More Glory. *Hag.*2.7,9. *I will fill this House with Glory;* The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than the former. (3.) More Power and Efficacy. *I will assemble her that halteth, and gather her that is driven out, and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever,* Mich. 4.6,7. (4.) More Condescention and larger Testimonies of his

his Acceptation. *I will accept you with your ſweet Savours, when I bring you out from the People, and gather you out of the Countryes wherein you have been ſcattered*, Ezek. 20. 40, 41. *Neither will I hide my face any more from them*, *Ezek.* 39. 29. (5.) More Unity. *I will gather them, and make them one Nation, and they ſhall be no more two Nations*, *Ezek.* 37. 21, 22. *And I will give them one heart*, as in *Ezek.* 11. 19. *I will gather them, and give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and their Children after them*, Jer. 32. 37, 38, 39. (6.) More ſecurity. Be no more a prey to *Heathens*, but dwell ſafely; as in *Ezek.* 34. 27. Then will God undoe all that afflict them, *Zephan.* 3. 19. God will raiſe up his Hedge of Protection much higher. (7.) More Honour and Reputation. He will get them Praiſe and Fame in every Land where put to ſhame; *Will make them a Name and a Praiſe among all people of the Earth*, Zephan. 3. 19, 20. *For your ſhame you ſhall have double*, Iſa. 61. 7. Oh what Sheaves are here! what a rich Harveſt for them that under ſuch Diſpenſations do ſow in Tears! *Pſal.* 126. 5, 6. What Wine will God brew his People out of theſe Tears! Fill your Water-pots to the brim, they ſhall be turned into Wine. I will but hint one diſtinction, which ſhall be as my Porch to enter upon Application; and that is this—— The want of *Solemn Aſſemblies* is either a total want, when God removes the Candle-ſtick: ſuch through Mercy, our want is not. Bread is ſomething more ſcarce in ſome places, but (through Mercy) it is not a Famine in all places; or (2.) a partial want, when God by death natural or civil, puts out, or whelms many Candle-ſticks under Buſhels. And this is the condition of divers *Aſſemblies* in theſe three Nations. Now though the firſt be naturally meant in the Text and Doctrine, and that which calls for

moſt tears, yet the latter may conſequently be taken in, as that which, being ſome degree of the former want, doth call for ſome, yea, great ſorrows. Scarſity is ſad, though Famine be moſt grievous.

APPLICATION.

Having thus far at ſome diſtance opened and confirmed this Truth, I ſhall come a little nearer to you that are more eſpecially concerned in it; and firſt I ſhall tell you what errand it doth not come upon; and then ſecondly, what errand it doth come upon to you.

Firſt, The errand of this Truth (my dear People) is not to alarm you into Sedition, or to gather you into any unlawful Aſſemblies, upon the account of the loſs of your *Solemn Aſſemblies*; of Conventicles (truly ſo called) *i.e.* Meetings to plot Diſturbance to the State. I would ſay, and have every one of you to ſay, as *Jacob*, *Gen.*49.6,7. *O my ſoul, enter not into their ſecret; and to their Aſſembly mine honour be thou not united.* If I may not be a Trumpet to call you to the Aſſembly, I will not be a Trumpet of Rebellion to ſound an Alarm. If I may not call you to the Mountain of the Lord, I will not ſay, *To your Tents, O Iſrael.* If I may not have *Aarons* Bells, I will not take *Peters* Sword. [The ſcars that the Sword hath given Religion, are but too conſpicuous] If I may not warm you, and be as an heavenly Spark, I will not be an helliſh Incendiary. I had rather give no light, than appear in a flame, and be a fire-brand. As *Paul* ſaith in another caſe, 2 *Cor.* 13.6. So I with changing one word in the Text; *I truſt ye ſhall know we are not ſeditious. Though we cannot do all that man requires, we dare not do what God forbids.*

We have minded you in our Doctrine amongſt you, to be ſubject to Principalities & Powers; and we hope in our Practice never to teach you to forget it. God admoniſhed

admoniſhed this People againſt all diſcontented and ſeditious Practices during the Captivity. But let God alone to bring about his good Thoughts. Reade *Jer.* 29.7. And ſo do I you. Do not ſmite others with the tongue, but ſmite on your own thigh. In your want of ſpiritual Bread, throw ſtones at none but your ſelves: Be not as thoſe Deſperadoes, in *Iſa.* 8.21. that when they are hungry, fret themſelves, and curſe their King and their God. Do not call for fire upon others heads, but for Springs of Water in your own hearts. Oh that God, who hath ſtopped the upper Springs, would open the nether Springs. It is for our Rebellions that we dwell in *a dry Land*, *Pſal.* 68.6. Do not ſmite with the hand. This Doctrine bids you ſhed tears, not blood; it bids you not draw blood, but draw water, and pour it out before the Lord; Not make places *Acheldama's*, but *Bochim's*. Humble your ſelves under the mighty Hand of God in your Debaſements. Do not riſe againſt them whom the mighty Hand of God hath exalted, *leſt haply ye be found fighters againſt God.* Plotting and Fighting will not bring Mercies again, that a People have ſinned away. God needs none of our ſins to advance his Sons Kingdom. When God hath ſoftened our hearts by his ſweet Grace, he can, and will, if he ſee it beſt, tender the hearts of our Superiours to pitty us, by his moſt powerful Providence. How did theſe Mourners at laſt find an heart touched by a mighty Hand, that called them out of their Graves, and made open Proclamation for their return! as you read 2 *Chron.* 36.22,23.

Secondly, Neither is it any part of the buſineſs of this Doctrine, to embitter you into Schiſm, and ſepation from the Aſſemblies, that through Mercy, are yet continued, which I for my part dare not but call, or at leaſt ſome of them, *Solemn Aſſemblies*, & *Church Aſſemblies*;

blies; though perchance in my eye, they may want ſomething of that Solemnity, Majeſty, Purity and Power, which I and you could deſire they had. If you may not hear me, yet it is ſome mercy that you and I may hear ſome others. I would not ſo mourn for what is not, as to forget to bleſs God for what yet is. I hope there are yet them to be found, that preach Chriſt of good will, and in the ſimplicity of their hearts continue in their work; though many of God's willing Servants have not freedom ſo to do. Take heed of extreams. It is the ordinary temptation in a time of Differences, to think we cannot run too far from them we differ from; and ſo whilſt we decline one Rock, we ſplit our ſelves upon another. Remember the old *Non-conformiſts*, were equal enemies to Superſtition and Separation. Maintain (I beſeech you) ſober Principles, ſuch as theſe are, that every defective Miniſtry is not a falſe Miniſtry; That ſinful Super-additions do not nullifie Divine Inſtitutions; That Impurities do not make Ordinances Nullities, no more than Leproſie doth unman him that hath it; That ſinful defects in Ordinances do not hinder the ſaving Effects of them; The ſeed may come up that is ſown by a leprous-hand; That there is a difference betwixt directing a Worſhip, preſcribing things ſimply evil, and manifeſtly Idolatrous, and directing about Worſhip; things doubtfully good being enjoyned, but the unqueſtionable ſubſtance of Worſhip being maintained. This latter doth not juſtifie ſeparation. If Corruptions in Worſhip (I mean ſuch) do unchurch a Church, it will be hard to find when there was a true Church, or where one will be found.

That the Church of *England* was a true Church; a true reformed Church, though not a full, compleatly reformed Church, is acknowledged by moſt ſober Spi-

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rits. A man of name, amongſt the Brethren of the Congregational Perſwaſion, ſpeaking of the Church of *England*, and its firſt Reformation, hath theſe words; As for "the great things of the Goſpel, matters of Faith, or "Doctrine, the Reformers had ſo happy an hand "therein, that there is to be found little, if any hay and "ſtubble therein. But in matters of Order, which "concern Worſhip and Diſcipline, let it be enquired "into, whether they were ſo exact therein. Although "this muſt be ſaid, that God did take care for all "fundamental Ordinances of Worſhip. And it is a "*bitter Error, and full of Cruelty*, to ſay, That we have "had no Churches, no Miniſters, no Sacraments but "Antichriſtian! So far Dr. *T. Goodwyn*, Faſt Serm. before Parl. on *Zech.* 4. 6, 7, 8.

Now me-thinks if it was a True Church, notwithſtanding ſome ſuppoſed Corruptions retained, it ſhould be ſo ſtill, notwithſtanding thoſe by ſome reputed Corruptions returned: for if the Diſeaſe do not unman a man, his Relapſe into it after a recovery cannot. We have ſtill that Doctrine profeſſed; we have ſtill thoſe fundamental Ordinances maintained. And methinks, where a Church, as to the main, keeps the Form of ſound Words, and the Subſtantials of that Worſhip which is Chriſt's, ſome adjudged defects in order cannot juſtifie Separation. I dare not diſmember my ſelf from that Church that holds the Head. I think whilſt Doctrine is for the main ſound, Chriſt ſtayes with a Church; and it is good ſtaying where he ſtays: I would follow him, and not lead him, or go before the Lamb. That ſpeech of the beloved Diſciple, 2 *John* 9. may without wrong be applied to a Church; *He that abides in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath both the Father & the Son.* It may be ſome may think that theſe Times that are gone over us, have left an obligation upon us in an orderly,

peaceable way to endeavour Reformation. I have no call here to debate that; but this I am ſure of, they have withal brought forth many ſad warnings againſt ſeparation in the ſad Apoſtacies, both in judgment and practiſe, which many of that generation of men have been left unto. Therefore, 1. Maintain communion as far as you can. 2. Crave indulgence where you cannot.— 3. Mourn in ſecret over what in pulick you cannot help; let that which upon good grounds you judge a corruption, have that work upon you, which *Peninnahs* provocations had upon *Hannah*, make you weep ſore and pour out your hearts before God: if there be any ſmoak in God's Temple, let it be ſmoak to your eyes. 4. Enlarge your care and pains in your preparations: a right ſtomach makes good nouriſhment of an indifferent meal. You may be warm (though in a colder air and room, than you have formerly been) if you will but put on more cloaths before you come. 5. Watch your hearts more narrowly, and ſpeak you things to your hearts more than ever you have done; you will not ſo well know what to do with your hearts, if you do not increaſe your own watch and pains. It is the wiſe man's ſpeech, *Eccl.* 10. 10. *If the Iron be blunt, and he doth not whet the edge, then muſt he put to more ſtrength.*

Now, 3. I come to tell you what the errand of this my Doctrine is. And it is an exhortation, firſt, to all upon whom at this day any meaſure or degree of this affliction lies. And then, ſecondly, to ſome who have a larger ſhare in this affliction than others—

Firſt, then; You that are loſing, or have loſt your *Solemn Aſſemblies*, know that you have a loud call unto mourning. The Wayes of *Zion* mourn after a manner, *Lam.* 1. 4. let us mourn after a Godly manner who are the Inhabitants of *Zion*, becauſe the chan-

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nels of comfort that have releived our ſouls are gon, or going far from us. Such dews ſhould fall at, or after Sun-ſetting. *Jeremiah* puts this into his Lamentation, that God had violently taken away his Tabernacle, as of a garden, He hath deſtroied his places of Aſſembly, *The Lord hath cauſed the ſolemn Feaſts, and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion*, Lam. 2. 6. Mercies uſe to be moſt lovely when they have their backs upon us, and we beſt ſee the worth in the want of our Mercies [*Bona a tergo formoſiſſima. Virtutem incolumen odimus, ſublatam exocculis quærimus invidi*] Give me leave to ſtrike your Hearts, as *Moſes* the Rock, with a few quickening Queſtions.

Queſt. 1. *Did they mourn, and ſhould not we? What were their Aſſemblies to ours?*

Anſw. Surely the Spirituality, Power and Bleſſing of our Aſſemblies far exceed theirs: Though the *Jew* was the elder Brother, it is the Chriſtian that hath *the Fatted-Calfe, The double Portion.* How far do *Ezekiels* meaſures exceed *Solomons*, or *Zerubbabels* work; the Temple of the Chriſtian Church ſurely he aimes at. We may ſay of Goſpel Ordinances as *Jacob* of himſelf, *Gen.* 49. 26. *The bleſſings of them have prevailed above the bleſſings of their Progenitors.* Theirs were but carnal ordinances comparatively, *Heb.* 9. 10. and the leaſt Chriſtian Aſſembly, (as Chriſt ſaid of *Jahn* the Baptiſt) is greater than they.

Queſt. 2. *Did they mourn that knew the ſet-time for the return of their Mercies, and ſhall not we that are uncertain what God will do? Have we any to tell us how long?*

Anſw. There are many but too bold in their calculations; its well if they be any better than thoſe in *Jer.* 27. 16. that ſet a ſhort period to the Captivity of the Sanctuary-Veſſels, but they lied and were good

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for nothing but to feed presumption; it is said, *The time was long and they lamented after the Lord*, 1 Sam. 7. 2. [Mercies, long ere they are attained, little improved when they are compassed, it may well be (as one said of faithful Friends) uncertain when they will return.]

Quest. 3. *Is it likely they should return back any other way than by streams of Tears sent after them?*

Answ. Did not this Peoples Mercies come back swiming in their Tears? Reade *Jer.* 31. 8, 9. and 50. 4. *They shall come with weeping, and they shall come going, and weeping.* There Tears of sorrow for their sins, and calamities, helped them now to weep Tears of ingenuity; and so when the Tide is at highest, they go forth towards their old enjoyments again: The higher the Waters of sorrow do Rise, the nearer Mercy is to Landing. *Psal.* 102. 13, 14. *The set time is come.* How doth that appeare? see ver. 14. *for thy Servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.* When God's People can most tenderly weep over the Churches Ruines, Repairation is near.

Quest. 4. *Should they return and not find us in Tears for their absence, would they not be joyless and comfortless Mercies? Can the Harvest be joyful to any but them that have sown in Tears?*

Answ. God calls the Mourners of This People to rejoyce with her, *Isa.* 66. 10. *Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her* [but who?] *all ye that love her; and rejoyce for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.* God tells this People, *Zech.* 8. 19. that their several *Fasts* shall be turned into *joyful Feasts*: the Women that are called to the Travel, are bidden to the Up-sitting and to the Feast; and indeed, proportionably to the sorrow at parting, wil be the joy at meeting again; the Tide will be according to the Ebb. The

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tidings that *Joſeph was not*, was ſo lamentable, that the news of *Joſephs being alive* was abundantly more reviving. No Mercy comes to us with ſuch advantage, as that, of which we may ſay, as the Father of the Prodigal; This Ordinance was dead and is alive, this Mercy was loſt and is found. The City *Shuſhans* perplexity, made their Good Day a great deal better.

Queſt. 5. *What are all our joyes, that we ſeemed to have in them when we had them, if we ſorrow not at the loſs of them?* Surely they were but ſeeming joyes! Surely we did but ſeem to welcome the light! ſurely our joy was but that, or the ſtony ground, or like that of *John* Baptiſts hearers. Can we take the loſs of things ſo, upon which our hearts really are? how ſhould one meaſure the truth and degree of our affections, but by the ſtrength of our afflictions in the removal of a thing? When I ſee a careleſs Soul or People under ſuch a bitter diſpenſation, methinks I have occaſion to ſay to them as the Apoſtle to the *Galatians*, chap. 4. 15. *Where is the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of?* you have ſometimes ſeemed as if you could have plucked out your eyes, and have given them to your Miniſters; and have you no Tears in your eyes, when they are removing from you that have been as your eyes? *Where is the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of?*

Queſt. 6. *Are you fit for the improvement of them? if God ſhould gather you, before you have got a ſenſe of the want of them? could it be in mercy?* Mercy is loſt upon unhumbled hearts. Could we be thankful, could we be fruitful! The returned Ark was a gladſome ſight to the men of *Bethſhemeſh*, 2 Sam. 6. 13, 19. but they not knowing how to uſe it, it was almoſt as ill a neighbour to them as to the *Philiſtines*: Probably they had not duely bewailed its captivity, for the lamenting of

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the People after the Lord is not mentioned till the next chapter, 1 *Sam.* 7. 2. The Word to unhumbled hearts is as the Seed to unbroken ground, it is thrown away and not ſowed. Winter time ſoaks and ſteeps the earth, and ſo makes it fruitful in Summer. Ground under water, and much floated in Winter, is moſt rich many times: If ever our Winter be paſt, they will make the beſt uſe of Summer that have bin under water. No feet ſo fit to ſtand in *Jeruſalems* Courts, as theirs that in their wanderings have been putting Tears into God's Bottle; as *David* did, *Pſal.* 56. 8. Tender-ey'd *Leah* was fruitful. Truly, tender-hearted bleare-ey'd Chriſtians are moſt like to be fruitful. If ever God delight in us, and our poor Aſſemblies be married again, if ever *Hephzibah* and *Beulah* be writ upon us, inſtead of *Forſaken*; as I may allude to *Iſa.* 62. 4.

Queſt. 7. *Are there not many things that may ſhame us for* (and O that they might ſhame us out of) *our ſenſleſneſs upon this account?* As firſt, Are there not thoſe that mourn for want of their Idolatries? Can we not find Women weeping for *Tammuz*, *Ezek.* 8. 14. Can we not reade of *Micah* taking on for the loſs of his gods and his prieſt? *Judg.* 18. 23, 24. and what, no Tears for our preſent loſs of Worſhip and God? Will not a Fathers ſeeming to bid ſome of our places farewel, make us mourn? Do we not reade of thoſe that have committed Fornication, and lived Deliciouſly with *Babylon*, that they ſhall lament and bewail her? *Rev.* 18. 9. and ſhall not we that have taſted of the fatneſs of God's Houſe bemoan our loſs? 2*dly*. Are there not thoſe to be found that have mourned for want of their wicked meetings? what a priſon is many a Drunkards houſe to him? what lowings of heart after them under any reſtraints? It is ſaid in *Iſa.* 24. 11. *There is a cry for wine in the ſtreets,*

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all joy is darkned, the mirth of the Land is gone, or as ſome tranſlate, *is gone into Captivity.* Mirth is gone with the liquor. And what, ſhall there be no cry for Ordinances that have run the pure blood of the Grape? ſhall true good-fellowſhip have no more mourners for the loſs of it? 3*dly*. Will not the want of trading fill many mouths with complaints, and many houſes with ſorrow? *Deborah* mentions (*Judg.*5.6.) the not *occupying the high wayes* as a ſad calamity: Tis ſaid of *Babylon*, *Rev.*18.11. *The Merchants of the Earth ſhall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandize any more.* Will not ſome places want their weekly Market, in ſeaſon preaching; and their extraordinary Fairs, out of ſeaſon preaching? Are not ſome great traders for Heaven in ſome places ſhutting down their ſhop-windows, and ſhould not this affect us? 4*thly*. Cannot any of us bemoan men and things that are much miſſed; Phyſicians, Lawyers, wife Neighbours, faithful Friends? O Sirs, what can be more miſſed than Ordinances? what Phyſitians, Comforters and Counſellors have they been to us? how many a time had we been at a loſs if not the Ordinances to go to! as *David*, Pſal.73.16,17. Ordinances are publick Advantages. It is a bad Husband indeed that is not miſſed, a bad Parent that is not miſſed, but how are good ones miſſed? Verily they that miſſe their Miniſters leaſt, need them moſt. 5*thly*. Are we not apt to over-ſorrow, if we be croſſed in our deſires, or loſe our deſirable things? ſhame thy heart with ſuch inſtances, as *Ahab*; can he go to his houſe heavy and diſpleaſed for want of a conveniency, and I loſe a thing ſo neceſſary without regret? Can *Amnon* be ſick for *Tamar* and pine away: And can I carry as if I could be, and do well enough without the loves of Chriſt in his Ordinances? So much for this firſt part of my Errand.

I now paſs on to the ſecond part of my Errand, and that is to thoſe that have, under this Loſſe, ſpecial and ſingular cauſe of mourning, &c.

1. Mourn you upon whom the Ordinances have been loſt whilſt they were amongſt you. The beſt ſhould mourn; for who hath improved under Ordinances as they might? But how ſhould they mourn that have been almoſt in all evil in the midſt of the Congregation and Aſſembly? *Prov.*5.14. Oh if any of us be yet on this ſide a Saving-change, as how many are! How ſad is it to ſee the Womb of Ordinances ſhut up! Oh to have the Bridge drawn up, the Portcullis let down, and thou not got within, but left to the roaring Lyons mercy, is a ſad caſe! Oh to have, for any thing you know, the Market done, and they that have ſold Oyl, making their laſt calls to the Cuſtomers that have too long paſſed by, ſhutting up ſhop, and thy Oyl yet to buy! Oh for God to ſeem to ſay to a place, I have done with you, they are joyned to their luſts, let them alone! The night of the Day of Salvation is to none ſo black and dark, as to them that have not known the day of their Viſitation. Chriſt weeps over ſuch a People, *Luke* 19.41,42. How ſhould ſuch a People weep over themſelves! The paſſing of Harveſts, and the ending of Summers, is of them moſt to be lamented, that have cauſe to ſay, we are not ſaved, *Jerem.* 8.20. They have cauſe to uſe thoſe words, in *Jerem.*6.4. *Woe unto us, for the Day goeth away, for the ſhadows of the Evening are ſtretched out.* Mourn you from whom the *Word* is going in word, before it is come to you in power.

2dly. Mourn you that may in a more than ordinary manner look upon your ſelves as the Forfeiters of ſuch Mercies, that have thruſt them away. Which of us can ſay in this caſe, our hands are clean? Who is not

acceſſory to the death of God's Servants? But there are ſome that are the principal, and of whom it may be ſaid, This breach be upon you. Give out the lot, and you will find eſpecially to ſorts of men taken (*viz.*) 1. Slighters of Ordinances; And 2. Such as have been ſlighty in them. Therefore,

1. O you ſlighters of Ordinances! mourn; How careleſs were you to feed beſides the Shepherds tents? have ye not been as thoſe that turn aſide? have you not choſen corners rather than Aſſemblies? have you not liſtened to any body that hath ſaid, *Loe here is Chriſt?* Oh! have not many of you turned under pretence of Corruptions of the Church, till you can ſee no Church at all in being? How many little petty Congregations ſet up, and Reforming Aſſemblies withdrawn from? Is it any wonder if ſo many Churches come to none? Is it any wonder if a Land in which there was ſo great a *forſaking*, find a *great forſaking in the midſt of the Land? Iſa.6.12.* 'Tis high time to draw the Cloth, when the Table wants Gueſts, and to break up School when the Scholars come not at it. It was the manner of too many to forget the *Aſſembling of themſelves, Heb.10.25.* Too many had loſt the way to their Fathers Houſe. [The Miniſtry that were your main burdens, God is eaſing you of many of them] God is by this Diſpenſation (I think) confuting that wild Generation that cryed down the Ordinances; But Wo worth them that put the Almighty upon ſuch a way of Confutation, that may coſt many their ſouls, and hath coſt many their livelihood! But theſe men will not hear me; the Lord ſpeak to them. Read and apply to this head, 2 *Chron.*29.6,7,8.

2. Oh you that have been ſlighty in them whilſt frequenters of them! mourn. Oh you that have not come to them as Solemnities with ſerious hearts! you that

that have made some stir in your approaches to God in some Ordinances, as a Sacrament, &c. but have not put on the wedding Garment for all Ordinances, O mourn. We would not cloath our selves for them, and so we are stripped of them. We mocked God when we should have served him, and so he will not be mocked; we were *but* as a People, and therefore *not so much* as a People; we had *but* a Name to live, and therefore we must not have *so much* as a Name; our hearts have been elsewhere whilst in them, and no wonder if such a People know they had (Oh sad that it may be said they had!) a Prophet among them, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 33. how have we lost our hearts in them! how little have we sought to see Jesus by them, and to touch him in them! No wonder if an Ark go into Captivity, when the Ark of God is looked at, and after, and not the God of the Ark. Oh how we have gloried in our Priviledges, and have looked after the Power of them! Oh our bare hearings! Oh our barren receiving of Sacraments! Oh our seeming desires after Church-Purity, and our little care of Heart-Purity! Oh our few out-cries against our corrupting of Ordinances, by the sinful mixtures of Distractions, base ends! &c. Oh how much of man, how little of a Christian in our approaches to God! How much was the Price of the Gospel fallen, even half in half, to what it was some years ago! How little precious was Vision, even among them that did not altogether slight it! A learned Man, who is of opinion, That the Witnesses are not slain, saith, *That the Reformed Churches shall be punished by taking away these Witnesses for a time, because they* received them not according to the Dignity of their Embassage. See *Jus Div.* Minist. pag. 63.

Mede, in *Rev.* 11. 21.

3. Mourn

3. Mourn you that have more than your ſelves to loſe the *Aſſemblies* from. Mourn you that are in a Family-condition. The more ſouls you have to want the *Aſſemblies*, the greater is your loſs. We are troubled at the death of a man that hath a great Charge. Oh what great Charges had many Miniſters, now laid aſide! *Adams* Fall was ſo much more to be bemoaned, becauſe he fell with all his Children in his arms. Churches and Families have great Dependance one upon another. Many Families, if good Families, make a Church, and a pure Church. And the good Ordinances in a Church, help much to make Families Churches. It is a great help to an honeſt Maſter or Parent, when he hath the Pulpit with him, and for him, and preſſing the ſame things that he doth. And it is a great help to a Miniſter, when Maſters and Parents keep that in the eyes and ears of their Families all the week, that he delivers on the Lord's Day. None do ſo much complain of the want of a School, as they that have not Children; and the more of them, the more is a School wanted. Mourn you that have numerous Families. Oh to what Aſſemblies may they be united where theſe are wanting! Oh how may they be leavened for want of this Bread! Oh how may they ſwoon at the top of ſtreets, asking Bread, and no man breaketh it unto them! Oh what Tinctures may they have received which will not eaſily out with Nitre, and much Soap! One years want of the Word, may loſe more than many years enjoyment will get; as in Watermen, that loſe more by the neglect of a few ſtrokes with their Oars, than they will get by many. If your have any pitty for the ſouls of yours, it will be ſad to you to think that you have in ſome meaſure ſinned away the Ordinances from your ſelves and them. Let there be no worſhip, and Children will ſoon ceaſe from fearing the Lord,

*Josh.*22.15. Let there be false worship, and they will learn to scoff by that time they have well learned to speak, 2 *Kings* 2.23,24.

4. Mourn ye that are double losers in the loss of *Assemblies*. If any should be in Sackcloth, the Witnesses should. O lament ye Priests, howl ye Ministers of the Lord. It is said of *Tyrus*, that the chief Mourners for her fall, shall be such as handle the *Oare*; *The Marriners and Pilots shall wallow themselves in Ashes, and cry bitterly, weep with bitterness of heart, and with a bitter wailing*, Ezek.27.29. In *Egypts* fall likewise, you find the principal Mourners are the *Fishers*; *They shall mourn, and all that cast Angle into the Brooks, and they that cast nets, shall lament*, Isa.19.8. Oh you under-rowers, you fishers for mens souls! mourn under this Hand of God; who should mourn as the Children of the Bride-chamber, and Friends of the Bridegroom, *when the Bridegroom* (Mat.9.15.) *is taken from them*? You have not only lost your livelihoods, but the life of your lives, your usefulness: [To be useless, is within a little to be essenceless; there is but a step betwixt not being, and not being useful] you have not only lost worship, but work, not means of geting good, but opportunities of doing good; not only the Service of the Altar, but the Supplies from the Altar. But to these I do not speak, if I did, I would hint such things as these to them. As, 1. That surely it is not for nothing that we are ever turned under the wheel, though the wheel hath variety of motions. 2. It may be some of our hearts upbraids us for our careless entrance into our work, and our unfaithful management of it. 3. It may be some of us are possessed with so dumb a Devil, that when we are off the stage, and have lost our set and stated Pulpit-work, we shall do little in occasional work (*viz.*) Preaching, Converse,

Converſe, and Converſation. 4. It may be ſome of us have cauſe of fear, leſt the Lord's forſaking of us ſhould be joyned with mans rejection. As God took the Spirit from *Saul* when he was rejected: So we, it may be ſome of us find, deadnings, witherings, decayings, corruption, ſecretly glad of this eaſe, and not miſſing our works, nor lying at God's door ſo earneſtly for work, as we ſhould do. 5. It may be ſome of us have much ado not to grow more in Pride, than in Humility, under the Self-denial that we are called to exerciſe; and find it no eaſie thing to be upon God's Errand, and not our own in our ſufferings. 6. It may be ſome of us have a numerous Family, our Quiver full of Arrows, and but an handful of Meal in the Barrel, and find that preaching of Faith is one thing, and living by it, another. Oh how hard to practiſe our own Rules! 7. It may be ſome us have divers of our Relations ſhipped in the ſame bottome with us, and under the ſame wrack. But I muſt withdraw my hand.—Hitherto God hath helped me to deliver my Errand. If the Lord let in this truth by the ear into your hearts, and you enquire of me, (1.) *How ſhall we get this Frame*; *And* (2.) *how ſhall we manage this Frame.* I will lay up all in ſome few Directions, ſome helping to it, and ſome guiding in it.

In the concluſion of this Diſcourſe, I muſt (as the Apoſtle in ſome Epiſtles) pack my matter cloſe.

Firſt, As to the means of getting this Frame, I ſhall only name a few. 1. Look at God in this Providence; man ſeen in it will breed Wrath and Indignation; but when God is ſeen in it, that will work Humiliation. God will judge mens actions; let us judge our ſelves. There is nothing in this Sermon intended to make you think hardly of men, but to

make you give Glory to God. 'Tis ſin that hath ſhut us out, and it is ſenceleſneſs of it that bolts and keeps us out: It is certainly an act of Juſtice in God. Good Pleaſure ſhines ſolely in the giving of Ordinances, but Juſtice appears in their removal; It may well be thought an unexempled Judgement, comes to chaſtiſe ſome unparalleled Sin. *Jeremiah* in his *Lamentation*, ſaw both God as the Juſtifier, and Sin as the Procurer of all their wo, *Lam.* 5. 16. 2. Beg a look from God, that though he hath his back upon us, yet that he will look back upon us; that though we muſt lye under theſe afflictions, yet they may be melting Afflictions. *Peter*, ſtirred not at the Cocks crowing once and again, until Chriſt looked upon him, then he wept. Our Calls are loud to Mourning, but it muſt be a Beam from the Sun of Righteouſneſs that will make our eyes run over. Complain to him of the hardneſs of our hearts; Did I ever think my heart could have ſtood under ſuch a Blow as this; O I ſee it is not the weight of my Afflictions, but the working of thine own Grace that will humble. I had thought I had had more love to Ordinances than I ſee I have; that thy Concernments had lain nearer my heart than I ſee they do!

3. Go about this Loſs, caſt up and compute what it comes to; mark well its Aggravations; tell its Circumſtances; diſſect it, and you will find it big with many ſore Evils: It is a whip of many cords, wherewith we are whipped out of the Temple. Scourge our hearts with the Conſiderations that offer themſelves to us when we ſit down to think of it. Theſe Mourners remembred *Zion*, they were oft handling the ſtones of *Zion*, calling *Jeruſalem* to mind. Mercies or Judgments in the bulk, and taken up in groſs, do little affect us, till we take them in pieces. Cordials are ſweeteſt when kept upon the tongue; and Pills moſt bitter

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when chewed. Think of the Nature of the Affliction, and think of the Cauſe of it, and then of the Time in which it is fallen upon us, and then of the Conſequents and Concomitants of it, and then of that Degree of it; and each of theſe will ſhew you that this ſad Providence, like *Ezekiels* Roll, is written within and without, with Lamentation, and Mourninig, and Wo.

2. As to the manner how we ſhould mourn, take it thus.

1. Be ſure it be for the *Solemn Aſſemblies*. Not for our reproach, but their reproach. It may be ſome of us are loſers, as to our wordly intereſt, in the loſs of our Spiritual advantages; that may help to raiſe the waters, but take heed it be not the Head and Spring, *Zech.* 7. 3. 5. There were ſome of the Mourners and Weepers that God chargeth as doing it to themſelves; *Did ye mourn unto me?* *Diana* was the Crafts-mens cry, but Gain was at the bottom. Dear reſpects to God, is as the Salt in theſe Springs; Self, is as Poyſon in them.

2. Be troubled, but take heed of perturbation. The dregs of carnal paſſion will mud theſe waters. Paſſions are like Barm, that ſets affections a working, and makes them work over; but then they mud the ſorrow much. Be as Jeſus at (*John* 11. 33.) the occaſion of *Lazarus* death, *He was troubled*, or he troubled himſelf. Perturbation raiſes the ſoul, and ſtirs up that corruption which was as ſedement at the bottom of the Glaſs. Perturbation makes even a *Moſes* ſpeak unadviſedly; it makes us as the Sea caſt out mire and dirt, makes us chide with any body, as the People with *Moſes* at *Marah*, Exod. 15. 23. In all the occaſions of ſorrow that you may have, be ſure you fall upon ſin, be angry at it. Such an one is my Miniſter, not that he is

worthy of that Place, but I am worthy of such a Minister. O it is a bad Sermon that is not better than the frame of my heart hath been sometimes, yea, many times under a very warm Ministry.

3. Keep the Nether-Springs of sorrow open, whilst the Upper-Springs of Ordinances, those heavenly Bottles, seem to be stopped, or, as a Fountain sealed. Pangs of sorrow upon such occasions are common things, but it is as a frame only that is evidencing. That sorrow that is but a dayes work is not the sorrow God hath chosen, Isa. 58. 5. margent. *My Tears*, saith *David*, *have been my meat*, Psal. 42. 3. Think of your spiritual refreshments when you sit down to meat, and make it appear, that we esteem the words of his mouth *more than our necessary food*, Job 23. 12. The word here in the Text notes *habitual grieving*. —— If the departure of Ordinances be grievous, what is their long stay? Surely, the loss of Ordinances is like the loss of a good Husband, or a good Wife, least at first. It is not like that you should weep so much as you did at first, but you may mourn more, you may have a deeper resentment of the loss, you may encrease your displicency against your selves. O grave your Assemblies upon the palms of your hands, let their Walls be continually before you; take in all remembrances that may renew your grief: Let your eye affect your hearts when you see the stones of *Sion* poured out at the top of any streets; conclude you are upon the losing hand in Grace, when you are losing your sense of this loss. People cannot but be growing strange with God, when such losses grow familiar with them.

4. Let our sorrow put us upon the lively exercise of Grace, and the more diligent use of all private Helps that may in any measure compensate this loss.—

1. Set upon the too much neglected duties of perso-

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nal humiliations and family humiliations. Our publick loſſes call loud upon us for ſecret and private duties. If ever the houſe of *Levi* weep apart, and their wives apart, it ſhould be at ſuch a time, *Zech.* 12.12,13,14. When *Iſrael* wanted their Smiths, they muſt then with more diligence uſe their Files, uſe all ſharpning, whetting wayes.— 2. Uſe all occaſional Meetings better. When the Diſciples (*Luke* 24. 17, *&c.*) were ſad upon the loſs of their Maſter, what profitable and edifying diſcourſes have they? Away now with impertinances, and ſteal a word or two of God and Heaven in our occaſional meetings, and turn our Civil converſe into Chriſtian communion.— 3. Catch at all opportunities of private communion, and be not willing to let them go without a bleſſing. It is ſaid of the Followers of Chriſt, *Acts* 1. 14. *They continued in Prayer and Supplication.* Only, manage all wayes of private communion not in oppoſition to, but in ſubordination to the publick, and likewiſe pray with the publick Worſhip much in your eye and heart. *Daniel* hath his window in private devotions towards the Temple opened; let us have our faces *Sion-ward* in all our private Supplications.— 4. Be warming the meat you have by meditation, and beg the Spirit as a remembrancer, *John* 14. 29. Chew the Cud now, love your Bibles, peruſe other good books, bewail the ſlenderneſs of your ſtore, conſidering your mighty wayes of trading. In a word, in all private duties avoid that which we are apt to condemn in publick Worſhip, formality, drineſs, ſapleſneſs: Look upon it as a mighty engagement upon us, to watch againſt that in private and ſecret Worſhip, which we think makes the publick Worſhip leſs lovely in our eyes. Look upon dulneſs and ſtraitneſs now as a double ſin, being againſt the Precept of God, and againſt the Providence of

God; we have many fewer hands then we had to help on our work, and ſhould ours be ſlothful? Our *ſails* are many of them taken down, we had need to ply our *oars*. —5. Sorrow into Humiliation, but not to Dejection. *David* wept, but withall he reaſons with his ſoul; *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul?* Pſal. 42. 4, 5, 11. and 43. 5. Sorrow not as thoſe that are without preſent ſtaies, and future hopes.

1. As for preſent Stayes. O mourning ſoul! is it nothing that there is no change in the Covenant of Grace? though it may be thou thinkeſt there is a great alteration, as to the Means of Grace. Thy Teacher is where he was, though ſome of thy Teachers be removed; It is he that taught thee by them, and he can teach thee without them. Thou haſt before ſeen cauſe to magnifie him, becauſe he did All by the Inſtruments, and now thou mayeſt ſee cauſe to omnify him, that can be to thee inſtead of all Inſtruments. Chriſt Jeſus is in Office, and in exerciſe of his Office, as Prophet, when ſome Officers may be diſcharged. *John* 5. 17. Chriſt works; if ſome others may not, can you not find all that you have loſt in that one Title of Chriſt, *The great Shepherd of the Sheep*? Heb. 13. 10. If you ſhould be brought ſo low as to ſee no Temple, yet may you find a Temple in the *Lamb*, Rev. 21. 22. Some think that Promiſe of God to this mourning People, *Ezek.* 11. 16. That he would be to them *as a little Sanctuary*, is not only a Promiſe of protection, but that he would from himſelf alſo make ſome ſupply of Temple-Ordinances. I will be a little Temple to you: I will be inſtead of your City-Walls, and your Temple-Priviledges.

2. As for future Hopes, there is room for an *If I ſhall find favour in his eyes*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25. The Prophet *Ezekiel* dare not conclude againſt dry bones living,

Ezek.

Ezek. 37. 3, 11, 12. The Text is a promiſe of gathering a mourning People. If it be asked, May we apply ſuch Promiſes? I *Anſwer*, Yes ſure, we may, with giving God that liberty he hath reſerved to himſelf, That he will either give us the very thing, or that which is equivolent. The Promiſes are a cōmon ſtock. What *Peter* ſaith of Scripture, [*There is no Scripture of private interpretation*] I may with a little change ſay of Scripture-Promiſes, they are not of private application. Nay, if that be true, which ſome upon good grounds affirm, That the Church then was typical, and the times that paſſed over her then were typical of that ſtate of the New-Teſtament Church in its latter age; then I ſay, theſe Promiſes are as much ours as theirs. Act Faith therefore on this Promiſe, if God hath pricked thy heart, and fear not to conclude, that either God will find us a room in his Houſe on Earth, or give us the Manſions that Chriſt hath prepared for us in Heaven. Either we ſhall be gathered thither where we have enjoyed Ordinances, or into Heaven where we ſhall need none, which is beſt of all. O let our ſcatterings unite us. O let us be ſowing Goodneſs, and ſcattering Religion wherever we come, [compare *Acts* 8. 1, 4. with chap. 11. 19.] And pour out our hearts in thoſe words, (with which the *Jews* conclude both in writing and in reading the Lamentations of *Jeremiah*) in *Lam.* 5. 21. wherewith I will conclude this mournful diſcourſe, *Turn thou us unto thee (O Lord) and we ſhall be turned: Renew our dayes as of old.* Amen.

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SERMON XVII. by Mr. John Clark, lodgrave, N.Y.

Ephes. 5. 15, 16.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as Fools, but as Wise, Redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil.

THe Apostle having in the former part of this Chapter, given the *Ephesians* warning to avoid that Looseness, Prophaneness and Disorder in their lives and conversations, which would exclude them out of the Kingdom of Heaven: In this verse he comes by way of inference to direct them what course they should take.

In which words we have several things well worthy our consideration; As,

1. The Duty enjoyned, and that with a note of earnestness; *See that ye walk circumspectly*; ἀκριβῶς. *Accuratè exactè.* *q. d.* have a care, be sure what ever ye do, that ye walk exactly: And this Duty he amplifies; 1. Negatively, *Not as Fools*; And, 2. Positively, *But as Wise.*

2. Here is a special part of the Duty particularized; *Redeeming the time.*

3. Here is a reason of the Command, or a motive to the performance of the Duty; *Because the dayes are evil.*

The words thus considered, are very pregnant, and will without much midwifery, bring forth these very many useful and seasonable Observations.

Doctrine 1. *That a truly Christian Conversation, is an exact Conversation.*

Doct. 2. *That a loose Life, is a Fools Life.*

Doct.

Doct. 3. *That he is the wiſeſt Man, that lives moſt exactly.*

Doct. 4. *That ſpecially in evil Times, we have need of much ſpiritual Wiſdom, for the right ordering of our Converſations.*

Doct. 5. *That it is a ſpecial part of Chriſtian Wiſdom, to redeem Time.*

Doct. 6. *That the worſe the Times are wherein we live, the more it concerns us to redeem Time, and to live exactly and wiſely.*

Doct. 7. *That to live looſely, and loſe Time and Opportunities of good when times are evil, is the vrieſt Folly in the world.*

Here are rich Materials for a large Fabrick, and I would gladly make the beſt of them for your advantage; but I am confined (not ſelf-confined as formerly, but by a neceſſity impoſed upon me) I ſay, I am confined to ſuch narrow ſtraits of time, that though it be a Treaſury of ſuch precious Truths as deſerves a long and ſerious view, yet I ſhall be conſtrained to crowd much in a little room, and to give you but an half-ſight of theſe Jewels, and ſo put them up again: but this I'le do, I will open the Cabinet, and ſhew them to you as I can, and ſo leave them with you, in hopes you will take a more full and conſiderable view of them afterwards. And ſo I ſhall begin with the firſt.

Doct. 1. That *a right Chriſtian Converſation, is a circumſpect exact Converſation*; a ſtrict and preciſe Converſation, wherein a man endeavours, *εἰς ἄκρον βαίνειν, to go to the top, and walk upon the very ridge of his Rule.* As *Paul*, (*Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14, 15.) who laboured not only to ſee at a diſtance, but to hit the very Mark of Chriſtianity. While he was a *Jew*, he was ſtrict and preciſe in that way; he was of the *ſtricteſt Sect of Religion*, *Acts* 26. 5. And ſo when he was converted to Chriſtianity,

anity, he did not throw off his ſtrictneſs and preciſeneſs, but guided it by the Rule of Chriſtianity; and exhorteth the *Epheſians* and all other Chriſtians, in the words of the Text, to do the like.

I ſhould not doubt eaſily to convince your judgements and underſtandings of this Truth; but becauſe ſtrictneſs is a thing that is every, where ſpoken againſt, the hardeſt task will be to perſwade your wills and affections to embrace this Truth. I ſhall endeavour both by this enſuing Demonſtration.

1. *Chriſtians have a Rule to live by, and this Rule is the Word of God.* This is that Rule mentioned by the Apoſtle, *Gal.6.16.* God hath not left man like brute beaſts in a Foreſt. As ſoon as he made man in the world, he gave him a Rule to walk and live by, *Gen.2.16,17.* And as an Emblem of this ſpiritual Encloſure, he left not our firſt Parents to wander in the wide World, but encloſed them in the Garden of *Eden.* The truth is, living by Rule, is the very notion of Religion; and the differences of Religion conſiſt in the diverſity of thoſe Rules by which men live. The Heathen hath his Idol Oracles, the Mahometan his Alkoran, the Jew his Ceremonial Law, and Chriſtians the Goſpel and whole Word of God: So that herein only men are Chriſtians, in that they make choice of the Word of God in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from all other Rules, to be the Rule of their lives and converſations: And whoſoever living under the Light of the Goſpel, walks by no other rule than the Heathens did, is a Chriſtian in title, but a Pagan in reality, *Gal.2.14, &c.*

2. *That life is moſt exact which is moſt ſuitable to the Rule.* As that building is moſt exact which is moſt regular; and in every work there is moſt exactneſs where there is neareſt conformity to the model; ſo, whatſoever be the Rule of our converſations, that life is moſt exact

exact which comes neareſt to the Rule. This is ſo plain a principle, that I need not ſpend more words about it.

3. It neceſſarily follows, *That there is moſt of Chriſtianity in that life which comes neareſt to the Rule of Chriſtianity, and conſequently moſt of Chriſtianity in that life which is moſt exact in conformity to the Word of God.* This is ſo plain a caſe, that I dare appeal to the Conſciences even of the worſt of thoſe, who call themſelves Chriſtians: For certainly there is not that man living under the Light of the Goſpel, that dare aſſert, that ſwearing, curſing, lying, whoredom, drunkenneſs, fraud, hatred, pride, covetouſneſs, hypocriſie, &c. are agreeable to the Rule of Chriſtianity, though thouſands live in the daily commiſſion of theſe ſins; whereby it is manifeſt in their Conſciences, that there is ſo much leſs of Chriſtianity, as there is more of theſe or any other irregularities in their lives. And thus far the Conſciences of the moſt debauched do frequently betray themſelves, to their unſpeakable horror upon their death beds, *Rom.*2.15. *Mat.*27.3,4.

This may ſuffice for the demonſtration of the truth of the Doctrine to the Conſciences of the moſt atheiſtical and obdurate ſinners, and therefore I hope much more to the enforcing of this Truth upon your affections. I proceed to [illegible]ication.

Uſe 1. The Premiſes conſidered, will give us certain information who are the beſt Chriſtians; namely, *thoſe that live moſt exactly.* This will cut off a great controverſie, and reſolve a great doubt among the weaker ſort of Chriſtians. They ſee the Profeſſors of Religion and Pretenders to Chriſtianity, chopt into many Diviſions, and Sects, and Factions, and theſe ſeveral parties, every one pretending to be in the right way, and hating, reproaching, and perſecuting one another.

another. And as this is a ſtumbling block and rock of offence to many that are weak, ſo it is uſed by others as a cloak for their Atheiſm and Licentiouſneſs, and liberty of doing any thing, and being nothing, and caſting off all care of Religion, as if it were ſo uncertain a thing how God muſt be worſhipped, and what Religion to be of, that they think it the beſt way to caſt off all care, and obſerve no Ruſe for the religious ordering of their converſations. Now I ſay, the ſerious obſervation of this Truth, will reſolve the doubts of thoſe that are weak, and pull off the vizard of thoſe, that under whatſoever pretence, do give themſelves over to a looſe and irreligious life. Obſerve therefore who they be that are moſt exact and circumſpect, and order their Converſations with the greateſt ſtrictneſs according to the Rule of God's Word, and they, be ſure, are the beſt Chriſtians: but they who indulge themſelves in a courſe of life full of thoſe ſins, that are contrary to the Word of God, and the Light of Nature, or caſt off the undoubted Duties of God's Worſhip and Service, they are ſo far from being the beſt, that they are not at all good Chriſtians. *Jehu* went high in his pretences to zeal for God's Glory, when he deſtroyed the Idols of *Baal* and all his Prieſts; yet by the Wickedneſs and Idolatry of his Converſation, he diſcovered the [illegible]nneſs of his heart and hypocriſie of his pretences, 2 *King.* 10. 16. & 29. 31.

Uſe 2. Let us then be exhorted and perſwaded to endeavour to walk exactly, and to order our Converſations in the ſtricteſt way of conformity to the Word of God. Brethren, I perſwade my ſelf, that there are few or none of you, but would be thought to be good Chriſtians, yea, of the number of the beſt; but if you would not only be thought to be ſo, but do deſire to be ſo indeed, then let it appear by this, even the

the hearty and serious endeavour to walk circumspectly and exactly; for otherwise you will make it to appear, that all your pretences to Religion are hypocritical and vain. For a man to be a Drunkard, a Swearer, a Whoremonger, a Sabbath-breaker, a Scorner of Godliness; or if he be not guilty of any of these gross sins, yet to be a worldling, a neglecter of secret and family Duties, a despiser of Ordinances, a keeper of evil Company, or but a barren Fig-tree in God's Vineyard, and yet pretend to Christianity, *it is all in vain*, Jam. 1.26. But if this recommended circumspect and exact walking be in reality, he thing you aim at, Then,

1. Be sure you acquaint your selves well with the Rule. I told you before, that Exactness consists in walking by Rule; and you know that the Word of God is the Rule of Christianity: therefore *search the Scriptures*, as Christ himself adviseth, *John* 5.39. and imitate *David* in reading, hearing and meditating upon the Word of God, whereby he *became wiser than his Enemies*, *Psal.* 119.97, &c. yea, then his very Teachers, and those that for their years might have known better than he what to do.

This is that very Rule which the Apostle gives the *Ephesians* in this Chapter, *Ephes.* 5. 10. 17. where he bids them, *Prove what is acceptable to God, and to get understanding in the Will of the Lord*, as without which they could never be so exact in their Conversations as they should: If you know your Masters will, you may the better do it; therefore improve all opportunities of knowing and understanding the Will & Word of God, that if you should ever want a faithful Minister to teach you, or should ever fall under the conduct of a blind Guide, that would lead you out of the way, (which God forbid) yet being well acquainted with the

Word

Word of God, you may thereby be kept from being enſnared and taken in the error of the wicked, *Pſal.* 119. 11. and may know how to order your converſations with that exactneſs, as becomes thoſe who are Chriſtians in good earneſt.

2. Having acquainted your ſelves with the Rule, beg of God Grace and Wiſdom to live according to that Rule. If you know not that you are nothing in your ſelves, you know nothing in the Myſtery of Godlineſs as you ought to know. If you know any thing of your ſelves, you know that you are inſufficient of your ſelves to every good word and work, and that all your your ſufficency is of God: Every true Believer hath experience of nothing more than of this, that without the Grace of Chriſt communicated to him, he is a meer empty nothing: But in Chriſt is all fulneſs of Grace, Grace without meaſure; not for himſelfe only, but alſo for all thoſe that beleive in him. Go therefore to God through Chriſt, for the communications of Grace and Wiſdom, as may ſuffice to enable thee to walk by Line and Rule, even the Word of God, *Which is able to make the man of God perfect and wiſe to Salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17.

3. You muſt often compare your ſelves with the Rule. An exact Carpenter will hardly fit the leaſt piece of Timber into his building without the uſe of his Rule and Square, and yet his building is but for a few years at furtheſt; and ſhall not we much more (eſpecially if we deſire to be exact) make uſe of our Rules who are building for Eternity? A Rule is not to look upon, but to uſe; and God hath not given us his Word to reade only, but to apply alſo: Now this a Chriſtian doth cheifly by meditation and ſelf-examination. Be much therefore in the exerciſe of theſe great Chriſtian Duties. Worldings and Hypocrites

mind

mind them not, practiſe them not. It ſhall be an argument of your ſincerity and the reality of your deſires to walk exactly, if you practiſe theſe duties frequently and faithfully. You have a Rule for your thoughts, ſhewing you that they muſt not be *vain*, *Jer.* 4. 14. nor *unclean*, *Job* 31. 1. nor *blaſphemous*, *Mat.* 9. 4. nor *idolatrous*, Acts 17. 29. nor *proud*, Rom. 12. 3. nor *unmerciful* and *coveteous*, Deut. 15. 9. theſe and all other evil thoughts are to be forſaken, *Iſa.* 55. 7. and your thoughts muſt be ſober and humble, *Rom.* 12. 3. and exerciſed about thoſe things *that are true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report*, Phil. 4. 8. in a word, every thought muſt be brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt. This you ſee is the Rule for your thoughts: You have a Rule likewiſe for your words, *Eph.* 4. 15. 1 *Pet.* 2. 1. *Jam.* 2. 12. *Jam.* 4. 11. *Mat.* 5. 37. *Col.* 3. 8. *Col.* 4. 6. the ſum whereof is this, *That putting aſide all filthy, falſe, vain, and evil communication, your ſpeech be alway with Grace, ſeaſoned with Salt.* You have a Rule too for all your actions, whether Natural, Civil, or Religious, comprized in that one verſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether you eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to the Glory of God.* Conſider now, either in the very act, while you are thinking, ſpeaking or doing any thing, or at leaſt in your after reflections upon them, whether they have been according to theſe Rules or not; and this is comparing your ſelves with the Rule, wherein you ſhall find a wonderful advantage in order to circumſpect and exact walking.

4. Converſe with thoſe that order their converſations with the afore-mentioned exactneſs. It was *Solomons* obſervation, *Pro.* 13. 10. that, *He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe*: And indeed it is very wonderful to obſerve, the ſtrange effects that are pro-

duced by converſe and ſociety, for the aſſimilating mens minds and manners to each other, either in good or evil. Hereupon the Apoſtle compares converſe to Leaven, *a little* whereof, only by a kind of ſociety, *will leaven the whole lump*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6. For this cauſe it was that God cōmanded the *Iſraelites* to deſtroy all the old Idolatrous Inhabitants out of the Land of *Canaan*, and ſtrictly forbad all intermarriages with them, leſt the *Iſraelites* by converſe and ſociety with them, ſhould learn any of their Heatheniſh and Idolatrous manners. Is it not for the ſame cauſe alſo, that the Apoſtle forbids the yoaking of Beleivers with unbelievers? 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. Certainly our own every-dayes experience and obſervation will tell us, that for the moſt part men are ſuch as they with whom they moſt frequently and familiarly converſe; and therefore we ſee that what Art ſoever any man deſires to be skilled in, he will endeavour as much as may be, to acquaint himſelf and converſe with ſuch as have the beſt inſight into that Art. Now let us make a ſpiritual improvement of this obſervation, and we ſhall make no little advantage of it: God who in his unmeaſurable Wiſdom knows beſt how to advance his own Ends, is not ſatisfied with the ſingle ſervices of any, or all the ſingle Perſons in the world; and hath therefore ordained that his Worſhippers ſhall worſhip him in Societies, and Congregations: And why? Not becauſe it is greater profit to him, *Pſal.* 16. 2. *Job* 22. 2, 3. Single perſons can adde nothing, no perfection to God, no, nor the greateſt Societies in the world, no more than ſingle perſons; but mark, God hath inſeparably twiſted his own Glory, and the Holineſs and Salvation of his Creatures together: So that he hath ordained and appointed to his Creatures the uſe of no means for advancing of his Glory, but ſuch as tend no leſs to advancing

advancing of their holineſs and ſalvation: So that it is apparent from hence, that the end of God's ordaining his Servants & Worſhippers to aſſociate themſelves together, is, that by their converſe and mutual example, thoſe Sparks of Grace, which he hath by his Spirit kindled in their hearts, might be blown up into a Flame, and that dead hearts might be kindled by their company. So we ſee that a little fire in many ſmall ſticks laid ſingly by themſelves is apt to go out; but if laid together, the fire increaſeth and inflames alſo thoſe which had no fire upon them. I know, you that are Chriſtians indeed, have abundant experience of what I ſay. Many a time anothers ardency in prayer, affectionateneſs in diſcourſe, fervency in preaching, &c. hath put life and ſpirit into you, when you have been as dull as ſtocks, and as ſenſleſs as ſtones, of your ſelves, and might ſo have continued, had it not been for that help. Anothers holy Example, his heavenly Diſcourſe, his ſober Carriage, his Watchfulneſs over his tongue, the Uprightneſs of his dealing, &c. hath won you to an holy Imitation and Emulation. Oh! therefore, if you have any deſire to order your converſations with that Exactneſs, which the Apoſtle here calls for, neglect not the aſſembling and aſſociating of your ſelves together, with ſuch as exerciſe themſelves in the practiſe of this Duty: It is a choice means, and ſo upon proof and tryal you will find it to be.

Uſe 3. Let us now, in the third place, improve what hath been ſpoken, by way of caution, that you may take heed of being prejudiced againſt *circumſpect walking*, or *exactneſs of life and converſation.*

1. Have a care of your affections in the firſt place, that they be not drawn away with the enticements of the fleſh, nor over-ſwayed with the opinion or reproa-

ches of the world: Looſeneſs and Prophaneneſs commonly creep in at this door: the Fleſh deſires its liberty, and thou art aſhamed to croſs the courſe of the generality, and to out-run thy neighbours, and then to be reproached for a *Puritan*, a *Preciſian*, or the new-name of a *Fanatick*; and when thy affections are thus hampered and intangled, then thy judgment muſt needs ſtrike in to maintain them.

2. Have a care therefore in the next place of thy judgment, that it be not leavened with any vulgar Error, as if all Holineſs were but Hypocriſie, and the worſt livers might repent when they are dying, and God would have mercy on one as well as another, &c. By which uncouch notions, many poor creatures gull themſelves into everlaſting Miſery. Have a care eſpecially, that you ſuffer not your judgments to be overmuch ſwayed by the obſervations of ſome mens practice. Perhaps you may ere long ſee many Profeſſors, now pretending to Exactneſs, then to put off their vizards, and to diſcover the falſeneſs of their hearts by the looſeneſs of their lives: And I wiſh you may know no Teachers that ſhall preach up Holineſs and Exactneſs in the Pulpit, and pull it down by the evil example of their own prophane converſations, or oppoſe and perſecute it in thoſe that ſeriouſly ſtudy and endeavour to put it in practiſe. By obſervation of theſe things, many who will not take the pains to weigh them in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, are gulled into a belief, (2 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2.) that either Religion is but a cheat, or at leaſt that it is not expected, whether by God or man, that they ſhould put in practiſe thoſe things which are taught them out of the Scriptures. Take heed of this, as a ſoul-deſtroying Prejudice.

Branch 2. The ſecond *Branch* of this *Uſe* will afford matter of caution againſt Diſcouragements. If you have

have begun to walk circumspectly, take heed of drawing back your foot from walking in that way: *Having begun in the Spirit, never think you can be made perfect by the flesh*, Gal. 3. 3. What though the way be rugged, and you meet with Poverty, Disgrace, Prisons and Deaths therein? Christ knew before-hand, as well as you, what it would cost you to be exact Christians, and yet hath so strictly required it, that if you set your hands to the plow, and look back, he will deem you unfit for the Kingdom of Heaven, *Luke* 9. 62. I must not enlarge upon every particular.

I shall conclude this point with one word of Consolation to such as are Conformists to this Rule of the Apostle; That if they suffer for being circumspect and exact in their Conversations, they really suffer as Christians; and then, as the Apostle *Peter* saith, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. so say I, *If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf*: Yea, let them rejoyce and be exceeding glad; yea, let them count it all joy. Indeed you cannot suffer in a better cause. If a man suffer for evil doing, there is matter of shame and sorrow; if he suffer meerly for an opinion, there is many times cause of doubting, which may damp his comfort; but if a man suffer for Righteousness sake, he hath such an undoubted witness of the Truth, and goodness of his Cause, that neither Men nor Devils can overthrow the Evidence thereof, and thereby cause his Comforts to wither and fail him. I have now finished the first point. The second is this.

Doct. 2. *That a loose Life is a fools Life.* This the Apostle doth clearly imply, when he saith, *Walk circumspectly, not as Fools.*

By a *Loose Life*, we mean such a life as is not tyed up and limited by the bonds & bounds of Gods Word,

and ſo may be bowed and bended to ſuit and comply with all companies, times, occaſions and principles, whereby it ſtands in direct oppoſition to that Circumſpection, Exactneſs, or Preciſeneſs which the Apoſtle in the Text calls for.

That ſuch a *Looſe Life* is a *Fools Life*, will appear, if we conſider how irrational and brutiſh a life it is, neither anſwering nor attaining the end of life, whereby it becomes void of all true Comfort, and will certainly end moſt miſerably. But for brevities ſake, I muſt forbear to enlarge upon theſe things, and that the rather, becauſe the *Folly* of ſuch a *Looſe Life* will be ſufficiently demonſtrated by the evidence of the next Propoſition, which is this;

Doct. 3. *That he is the wiſeſt man, who walks moſt circumſpectly, and lives moſt exactly.* Paſſing by at preſent many other Scripture-Proofs, I ſhall here record only three ſayings to this purpoſe, of the wiſeſt of meer men, *Prov.* 10. 8. *The wiſe in heart will receive Commandments*; i. e. He that doth not only pretend to Wiſdom, but hath it rooted in his heart, will make it to appear by this, that he will ſo receive God's Commands as to obey them, and live by them. *Prov.* 23. 19. *Hear thou my Son, and be wiſe, and guide thine heart in the way.* This is a Precept for the attainment and exerciſe of true Wiſdom, which is by guiding his heart, and conſequently his life in the way of God's Commandments. *Prov.* 28. 7. *Who ſo keepeth the Law, is a wiſe Son.*

I know that there are many pretenders to Wiſdom. Among the men of the world, he ever accounts himſelf the wiſeſt man, who is moſt ingenious to accompliſh ſuch deſigns, as tend moſt to the ſatisfaction of thoſe particular luſts whereto he is addicted. So among the

the Covetous, he is accounted wiſeſt, who can heap up moſt wealth, *Prov.* 28. 11. Among the Ambitious, he that can clime to the higheſt pitch of honour: Among the Voluptuous, he that can find out the choiceſt wayes of pleaſing the ſences. But theſe are but meer pretenders; for in truth, *this their way is their folly*; and upon all their wiſdom we may write *Solomons* Motto, *Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity and vexation of ſpiritt. God hath made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world; yea, he will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, & bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent*, 1 Cor. 1. 19, 20. *Where then is wiſdom to be found? and where is the place of underſtanding?* Job 28. 12, 28. *Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom; and to depart from evil, is underſtanding*, Prov. 15. 21. He is the only man of underſtanding, that walketh *uprightly*, and knows how to order his Converſation with Circumſpection and Exactneſs. This in the general: but for further demonſtration of this Truth in the particulars.

Reaſon 1. He that walks moſt exactly, is the wiſeſt man, becauſe therein he doth beſt for himſelf. The wiſe Man ſaith, *Prov.* 9. 12. *If thou be wiſe, thou ſhalt be wiſe for thy ſelf.* Truly whatſoever wiſdom any man may ſeem to have, yet if he be not wiſe for his own good, he is but, as we ſay, *Penny wiſe, and Pound fooliſh*; and that no man can be wiſe for his own good, who gives himſelf over to a looſe, irregular and ſinful life, is evident from this and ſeveral other Texts of Scripture, *Prov.* 8. 36. & 6. 32. & 15. 32. & 29. 24. *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul.* But he that walks exactly by the Rule of God's Commands, is wiſe for his own good in all reſpects: He is wiſe for his ſoul, wherein a mans own chiefeſt good doth conſiſt. *Prov.* 19. 16. *He that keepeth the Commandment, keepeth his own ſoul.* Yea, but may the wicked think,

if they are wiſeſt for their ſouls, we are wiſeſt for our bodies. Nay, but the Godly are wiſeſt for their bodies alſo: for while they live, they make *their bodies the Temples of the holy Ghoſt*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. & they ſo provide, that after death at the Reſurrection, *their bodies are raiſed incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and ſpiritual bodies*, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43, 44. Phil. 3. 21. whereas the bodies of the ungodly, while they live, are but as a cage of unclean birds, and after death, *ſhall be raiſed to everlaſting ſhame and torment*, Dan. 12. 2. Furthermore, the Godly Man is wiſeſt, both for this life, and alſo for the life that is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. I might yet add many other particulars, wherein it will appear, that a Godly Man is wiſeſt for himſelf. He keeps himſelf ſafeſt, *Prov.* 10. 9. & 3. 23, &c. He makes himſelf richeſt, *Pſal.* 112. 3. *Prov.* 3. 16. & 8. 18. & 22. 4. He advanceth himſelf higheſt, *Prov.* 3. 16. and the other forecited places. He lives longeſt, *Prov.* 9. 10, 11.

Now therefore my Brethren, if you have regard to your ſouls or bodies; to this life, or that which is to come; to your ſafety, wealth, honour, or life, and would act the parts of truly wiſe men in all reſpects, then *ſee that you walk circumſpectly* and exactly.

2. Again, as he that walks moſt exactly, appears to be the wiſeſt man, in doing that which is beſt for himſelf, ſo alſo in that he doth beſt for his Relations, his Family, his Friends, his Neighbours, his Country, his Poſterity, do all fare the better for his goodneſs. *Potiphars* houſe fared the better for *Joſephs* ſake, *Gen.* 39. 2, 3. All *Egypt* for *Jacobs* ſake, *Gen.* 45. 5. *Davids* poſterity for *Davids* ſake: And *Sodom* & *Gomorrah* ſhould have fared the better for ten righteous Perſons ſake, if they could have been found there, *Gen.* 18. 32.

3. He that walks moſt *exactly*, is the *wiſeſt Man*, becauſe he doth that which is moſt pleaſing to God. Certainly,

tainly, if there be any wiſdom in a Subjects pleaſing his Prince, a Son his Father, a Servant his Maſter, there is much more wiſdom in a Creatures pleaſing his Creator.

I am neceſſitated to be very brief, but I know theſe things will not be received by many without the oppoſition of ſeveral Objections, and therefore I muſt needs ſave a little room for the anſwering of thoſe Objections; if not to the ſatisfaction and ſilencing of the carnal Objectors, yet for the eſtabliſhment of the minds of the weak.

Object. 1. *But do not theſe perſons that live ſo exactly, cut themſelves ſhort by their preciſeneſs, of much of that pleaſure and profit which they might otherwiſe receive? and what wiſdom is there in that?*

Anſw. 1. It is true, that they do abridge themſelves of much of that which the men of the world call pleaſure and profit; they dare not drink and game, and be wanton, and cozen, and cheat, or devote themſelves to the cares of the world as others do.

2. But that which the world calls pleaſure and profit, is not ſo to them. They find no joy in thoſe fleſhly delights, which worldlings pretend do yeeld them ſo much pleaſure; and that profit which is got by unlawful means, they ever account the greateſt loſs. Take *Solomon* for an inſtance hereof, *Eccleſ.* 2. from the *1ſt.* to the *12th ver. He gave himſelf* (for experiment ſake) *to Mirth and Wine; he made great Works, and built Houſes, and planted Vineyards, and Gardens, and Orchards; he made Pools, and got him Servants in abundance, and Flocks and Herds of all ſorts of Cattel; he gathered Silver and Gold, and other precious Treaſures; he got Men-ſingers, and Women-ſingers, and all the Delights of the Sons of Men, as Muſical Inſtruments, and that of all ſorts;* and when he had done, he looked back upon all, and writes

writes this Motto upon them, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of ſpirit.*

3. Nay, thirdly, theſe perſons of all the men in the world, do enjoy the only true Pleaſure and Profit; and that is the Pleaſure and Profit which they have in and by their living *preciſely* and *exactly*. *Godlineſs* is their *gain*, *Grace* their *riches*, the *Service of God* their *pleaſure*, and the *Favour of God* their *honour and life*. Theſe are the things wherein alone they delight themſelves, and wherewith they are enriched to Eternity. As for the things of this life, if their godlineſs bring them in but little, yet withal it makes that little to be better to them, *than the treaſures of many wicked*, Pſal. 37.16.

Object. 2. *But do they not by their Preciſeneſs, create to themſelves a ſad and melancholy life? And what wiſdom is there in that?*

Anſw. 1. Men are much miſtaken in this cenſure. Becauſe the Godly do not mingle themſelves with their carnal pleaſures, therefore they look upon them but as a lump of melancholy fleſh. But his Joy is a kind of joy, which a ſtranger intermeddles not withal. The men of the world underſtand it not, and therefore they think there is no ſuch thing. But,

2. If the Godly have ſorrow at any time, it doth not ariſe from their preciſeneſs, but becauſe they are not ſo *preciſe* and *exact* as they ſhould and would be; but evermore the more circumſpectly and exactly they walk, the more full of Peace, Comfort and Joy they are.

3. A Godly mans ſadneſs, is but in order to the attaining of a more true Comfort and full Joy, by removing ſin, which obſtructs and hinders his comfort. *Though weeping endure for a night, yet Joy comes in the morning,*

morning, and that ſo much the more abundantly. Hence his ſadneſs is a bleſſed ſadneſs, becauſe it ends in everlaſting joy; but the mirth of the wicked is a curſed mirth, becauſe it ends in everlaſting horrour, *Pſal.37.37,38.*

Obj. 3. *But do they not make themſelves the Scorn of the World by their Preciſeneſs? and what wiſdom is there in that?*.

Anſw. 1. It is not for want of Ignorance that the men of the world ſcorn at their preciſeneſs. Alas poor creatures! Did they but know how little hurt they do them, and how much hurt they do themſelves by that ſcorning; did they but know how they provoke the great God, by ſcorning at his Servants and Service, and how ſad an account they ſhall give at the laſt day, and how much better it would have been for them to have been preciſe themſelves, they would never make ſuch a ſcorn of preciſeneſs as they do. Had the very Children that mocked the Prophet (2 *Kin.*2.23,24.) known of the Bear, durſt they have done it? Had the *Jews* foreſeen the *wrath of God breaking out againſt them without remedy*, durſt they have mocked as they did? 2 *Chron.*36.16.

2. But however, What wiſdom were it for a man to undo himſelf for ever, becauſe others ſcorn at him for taking the right courſe to make himſelf happy for ever? Should *Job* have forſaken his integrity, *Job* 21.3. or *Chriſt* left off the work of Redemption, *Mat.*27.29. or *Paul* his Preaching, *Acts* 17.32. or *Jeremiah* his Propheſying, *Jer.*20.7. or the Apoſtles their Miniſtry, *Act.*2.13. or the Martyrs their Conſtancy, *Heb.* 11.36. becauſe they met with mockings, ſcorns, and reproaches, what wiſdom would there have been in that? How ſad would it have been for them and us? You cannot but know that a ſtrict life in the wayes of God,

God, is the way to eternal happineſs; but the looſe, broad way of ſin, is the way to Hell, *Mat.7.* 13, 14. and therefore if you will forſake the narrow way, and walk in the broad way, and ſo undo your poor ſouls for ever, becauſe fools ſcorn at you, you will make your own folly appear to be the greateſt in the end.

3. Though the men of the world ſcorn them for their preciſeneſs, yet they have the commendations both of God and all good men. *Their praiſe is of God*, Rom. 2.29. and as for good men, *all their delight is in them, as the only excellent Ones upon Earth*, Pſal. 16.3. And which is better, the praiſe of God, or the praiſe of men; the praiſe of good men, or the praiſe of wicked men? judge ye. Certainly thoſe ſcorns are avoided at too dear a rate, which are avoided with the loſs of the favour both of God and all that are good.

Obj. 4. *But they get themſelves many enemies by their preciſeneſs, and what wiſdom is in that?*

Anſw. 1. And who are thoſe Enemies of theirs? None but the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh; And is the friendſhip of theſe ſo deſirable a thing? or is it not better loſt than won? Would you have the Devil your friend? ſure there will be little gotten by that. Would you have the World for your friend? ſurely the gain would not recompence the loſs; for *the friendſhip of the World is enmity with God*, Jam. 4. 4. Would you have the fleſh to be your friend? It will but flatter you to your own deſtruction. Therefore the People of God do not at all value the friendſhip of theſe falſe, counterfeit and deſtructive friends. But,

2. They have God for their Friend, *Jam.* 2. 23. and good Angels, *Luke* 15. 7, 10. and all good men, *Pſal.* 16. 3. Put caſe now, that God, Angels and Saints ſtood on one ſide; and the Devil, World and Fleſh ſtood on the other ſide, and you were put to make

make your choice which three you would have for your friends, and which three for your enemies, which would you chuse? Answer this Question, and the Objection is fully answered. But further,

3. Their friends are more, and a thousand times better and stronger than their enemies. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*, saith the Apostle, 1 *John* 4.4. And with this very consideration the Prophet *Jeremy* encourages himself against all the spite and malice of his enemies, *Jer.*20. 10, 11. Fear not therefore, ye that walk strictly in the paths of Righteousness; for though the enemies were a thousand times more and stronger than they are, yet they shall not prevail against you to harm you, whilst you are followers of that which is good, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. but in God's good time *you shall be more than Conquerors over them all through Christ that hath loved you*, Rom. 8. 37.

Obj. 5. *But they expose themselves to many sufferings by their preciseness, and what wisdom is there in that?*

Answ. 1. If they do suffer, they are but therein made conformable to Christ, *Rom.* 8. 17. and *partakers of his sufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 13. Christ himself hath led the way through manifold sufferings, and they do but follow their Lord and Master. A good Souldier will live and die with a good Captain, and a good Subject will sink and swim with a good Prince, nor will they account it any discredit: and why should any Christian who hath devoted himself to the service of Christ, as his great Lord and Master, think much to follow the Captain of their Salvation through difficulties and sufferings?

2. Their sufferings shall not be for their hurt, but their good; not their loss, but their gain. *If we suffer with Christ, it is that we may be glorified with him*, Rom. 8. 28. And then, by the Apostle's Arithmetick, we may

may well reckon that *the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with that glory, which ſhall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 17, 18. But,

3. *The Lord will deliver them out of all their troubles.* *Pſal.* 34. 19. And this God doth many times in this life, by removing their enemies, or reſtraining their wrath, or even making them at peace with them, *Pro.* 16. 7. or however, God will deliver them by tranſlating them to a better life, and ſetting them thereby out of the Gunſhot of all their enemies, and ſo at once he wipes away all tears from their eyes, and ſorrow from their hearts for ever.

Obj. 6. *But they many times ſhortten their own dayes by their preciſeneſs, and what wiſdom is there in that?*

Anſ. 1. This Argument will not affright the men of the world from their Worldlineſs, Ambition, and Fleſh-pleaſing; And ſhal it affright us from our Religion, the care of our ſouls and the ſervice of our God? Do not the Drunkard & Glutton fill their bodies with many loathſome and mortal diſeaſes, and *a dart ſtrike through the Adulterers liver?* Prov. 7. 23. Do not Theeves end their dayes at the Gallows, and thoſe that clime to the top of Honour commonly ſacrifice their necks upon a Block? Is it not the peremptory Decree of the *GREAT KING*, that *Bloody men ſhall not live out half their dayes?* And yet we ſee that the ungodly will hearken to none of theſe warnings eithet from God or man. O conſider this with ſhame; Shall not we be as bold and venturous for God and Chriſt, and our precious ſouls, as the men of the world are for their filthy luſts and beaſtly pleaſures? I ſhall here record an excellent ſpeech to this purpoſe, of that man of God, Mr. *Whitaker*, reported at his Funeral by his now companion in Glory, Mr: *Aſh*. As Mr. *Whitaker* was riding with with a freind of his by *Tyburn*, he ſtopped

ſtopped his Horſe, and uttered theſe words with great affection, "O what a ſhame is it that ſo many thou-"ſands ſhould dye for the ſatisfaction of their luſts, "and ſo few be found willing to lay down their lives "for Chriſt! Why ſhould not we in a good Cauſe, and "upon a good Call, be ready to be hanged for Jeſus "Chriſt? It is everlaſting honour; and it is a thou-"ſand times better to dye for Chriſt, to be hanged; "to to be burnt for Chriſt, than to dye in our beds.

2. If they do ſhorten their dayes, it is but a miſerable momentary life which they ſhorten, and they are but thereby *taken away from the evil to come.* And then,

3. The ſhortning of this life doth but the ſooner bring them to a Life of Glory in Heaven. Indeed if their condition were the ſame with the condition of the ungodly; if they loſt Heaven and Earth, the lives of their ſouls and bodies together; If their death were an eternal death, and the end of their temporal miſeries the beginning of eternal torments, it were a very ſad argument, but the caſe is not ſo bad; Whatever they loſe for Chriſt in this world, ſhall be recompenſed a thouſandfold in the world to come with eternal Life. Now lay all theſe things together, and conſider that this ſtrictneſs or preciſeneſs is commanded by God, and is moſt ſutable to the Rules of Chriſtianity: And doſt thou profeſs thy ſelf a Chriſtan, a Diſciple of Chriſt, a Servant of God, and one that lives in hope of everlaſting Life; and haſt thou not yet learn'd to forſake all, deny thy ſelf, take up thy croſs and follow Chriſt? Certainly if thou be a Chriſtian indeed, and haſt received that Wiſdom which is from above, none of theſe things will move thee, neither wilt thou count thy life ſo dear to thee, as for the ſaving it, to forſake the holy Commandment.

Having

Having now vindicated this Truth from those Objections that might seem to weaken it, I proceed to give a brief hint what use may be made of it.

Use 1. If they that live most exactly are the wisest men, then it is so far from being a shame to live exactly, (*Psal.* 119. 6.) that it tends much to the justification and commendation of those that so order their conversations: And certainly, the world is much mistaken in their censure and judgment concerning them. *They think it strange that all do not run to the same excess of riot with them,* (1 Pet. 4. 4.) *and speak evil of them,* as fools and mad men, because they willingly forgo the pleasures and advantages of this present life for things future and invisible: but the end will make it sufficiently to appear, who are the fools, and who are the wise men. Therefore,

2. Be exhorted and perswaded to exercise this piece of wisdom. Wisdom it is, and that of the best sort, for it is Divine and Heavenly Wisdom. So the Apostle tells us, *Jam.* 3. 17. *That Wisdom which is pure and full of good fruits comes from above,* it is saving Wisdom. In 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. the Apostle tells us, that *the Scriptures are able to make a man wise to Salvation,* in as much *as they were given by God to make men pefect, throughly furnished unto all good works:* Labour then for this Scripture-Wisdom, and search for it as for hid treasures; it alone shall abide, and the good fruits thereof remain with thee to Eternity, when all other wisdom in the world shall perish, and by its fall shall ruine the owners and professors thereof.

I have now finished the third Observation. I must use much more brevity in those which remain, and so I pass to the fourth, which is this;

Doct. 4. *That then especially in evil times we have much need of spiritual wisdom for the circumspect and exact ordering*

ordering of our converſations. Thus the Apoſtles Argument runs, *Walk circumſpectly, and redeem time, becauſe the dayes are evil.*

This is a duty at all times, but eſpecially in evil times it is both a Duty and an Advantage.

That we may underſtand what is meant by evil times or Dayes, we muſt know that there are two ſorts of evil.

Firſt, The evil of ſin, whereof Devils and men are the only authors.

Secondly, The evil of puniſhment or miſery; in this ſence it is uſed, in *Jer.* 17. 17, 18. *Amos* 6. 3. and though ſin be the meritorious cauſe of this evil, and Devils and Men, yea, and good Angels alſo are made uſe as inſtruments of it, yet God takes it upon himſelf, as the Author thereof, *Amos* 3. 6. Thus the Times or Dayes are evil.

Firſt, When they are ſinful Times, ſuch times as our Saviour foretold, *Mat.* 24. 11, 12. *When falſe prophets ſhould ariſe and deceive many: When iniquity ſhould abound, and the love of many ſhould wax cold*

Secondly, The Dayes are evil, when they are full of trouble and miſery.

Theſe evil Dayes of both ſorts, are either,

1. Common, by reaſon of that ſin and miſery, which are incident to every mans life, (*Eccleſ.* 12. 1.) in reſpect whereof *Jacob* told *Pharoah* that *the dayes of his life had been few and evil,* Gen 47. 9.

2. Or ſpecial, When both ſin and trouble do abound in more than ordinary meaſure.

Again, theſe evil Dayes are either,

1. General, When both ſin and miſery do more than ordinarily abound in the World, or in a Kingdom.

2. Or particular, When a mans own particular life hath been extraordinarily full of ſin and trouble.

The Apoſtle in the Text doth principally reſpect the ſpecial and general ſinfulneſs and troubleſomneſs of the times: but in what kind ſoever the dayes are evil the evilneſs of them is an argument for circumſpect walking, and exact ordering of our converſations. For, if the Times be ſinful;

1. In ſinful Times there is much liberty, and encouragement to ſin. The Multitude run to ſin, the ſtream goes that way, and it is an eaſy thing to go along with the ſtream; but it is certain, that the ſtream will carry a man to perdition: So that if we would not periſh in ſinful times, we muſt ſtrive againſt the ſtream by circumſpect walking. Theſe are thoſe perillous Times, from the authors whereof the Apoſtle warns *Timothy* to turn away, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1,2,3,4,5,6.

2. In Sinful Times there are many temptations and enticements to ſin; in which reſpect the Apoſtle calls ſuch dayes *evil dayes*, and therefore adviſeth, at ſuch times eſpecially, to *put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to ſtand, and keep our ſelves unſpotted from the pollutions of the world*, Epheſ. 6. 13.

If the Times be evil, in reſpect of the trouble and miſery that attends them. Then,

1. In Times of Trouble and Miſery a man hath moſt need to get and keep peace of conſcience. Oh! it is a ſad thing for a man to be loſt, as much with ſtorms of guilt within, as with waves of trouble without. But there is no getting or keeping true peace of conſcience without circumſpect and exact walking. *The fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in peace*, Jam. 3. 18.

2. In Troubleſome Times a man had moſt need to get and keep the love and favour of God, and thereby

an

an intereſt in the Promiſes of this life; or, if thoſe be forfeited, yet to be ſure of an intereſt in the Promiſes of the Life to come: But this cannot be done without circumſpect walking, for it is only, *Godlineſs* that *hath the promiſes of the life that now is, and that which is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8.

Uſe. How prepoſterous and fooliſh a courſe is it then for any man to think to ſecure himſelf from the evil of the times, by complying with the times; to comply with the evil of ſin, to avoid the evil of trouble? *This is to make a covenant with Hell, and to be at an agreement with Death, But when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through the Land, God ſhall diſanull their Covenant, and break their Agreement, Iſa.* 28. 15, 18, 19. This there carnal wiſdom ſhall be deſtroyed; the iniquity of their heels ſhall compaſs them about, and they ſhall be taken in the ſnare of Vengance.

So much of this fourth Obſervation, the next is this;

Doct. 5. *That it is a ſpecial part of Chriſtian Wiſdom to redeem Time.* To know and diſcern Time and Opportunities doth very much conduce to this redeeming of Time: but this the Wiſe man makes the property of a wiſe mans heart, *Eccleſ.* 8. 5.

Redeeming of Time, implies ſome kind of recovering that time which is already loſt, a diligent improvement of that which is preſent to the beſt advantage, and a getting before hand with time, by making ſure of Eternity.

I would have told you how to redeem Time in three particulars.

1. The loſs and former miſſpending of precious time muſt be heartily bewailed and repented of.

2. Thoſe luſts and affections by which time hath

been loſt and miſſpent, muſtbe mortified and ſubdued. If worldlineſs hath been the occaſion of this loſs, the care of outward things muſt be moderated; if pleaſures, they muſt be abandoned; if ſloth and eaſe, they muſt be ſhaken off, &c.

3. There muſt be a doubling of your diligence, that ſo you may live much in a little time. But I muſt leave theſe things to the further improvement of your own meditations, and ſhew you in a word or two, that this redeeming of Time is a ſpecial part of Chriſtian Wiſdom. For,

1. The redeeming of Time is the redeeming of a precious Treaſure, which if once loſt, can never be fully recovered again. If Riches ſhould take to themſelves the wings of an *Eagle* and fly away, they may return again, as they did to *Job*: If Credit and Honour ſhould be loſt, they may be reſtored again, as they were to *Nebuchadnezzar*. Yea, and there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the body, though it dye and return to duſt; but there ſhall never be any Reſurrection of Time. If Graſs be cut down it will grow again; and there is hope of a Tree, if it be cut down, that through the ſcent of water it may bud forth & ſpring up again: but Time that is once paſt and loſt will never ſpring up again. Therefore it muſt needs be a Chriſtians wiſdom to make the beſt improvement of ſuch a Treaſure.

2. Redeeming of Time is a laying up in ſtore a good Foundation for Eternity. And what greater Wiſdom is a Chriſtian capable of, than ſo to husband his time, that his Time and Happineſs may not end together.

Uſe.

If this be ſo, Then either they are no Chriſtians, or but very fooliſh Chriſtians, who loſe and miſſpend Time,

Time, they are like the fooliſh Virgins, *Mat.* 25. whoſe undoing it was that they neglected the time of furniſhing themſelves with Oyl, and ſo came too late to enter with the Bridegroom into his Chamber. This alſo was *Eſau's* undoing, who let ſlip the ſeaſon of getting the Bleſſing, and could never recover it again, *though he ſought it carefully with tears*, Heb. 12. 17.

There yet remain two of thoſe Obſervations which I made at the beginning upon the words of the Text.

Doct. 6. *That the worſe the Times are wherein we live, the more it concerns us to redeem Time, and to live exactly, and walk wiſely.* And

Doct. 7. *That to live looſly and loſe Time and Opportunities of good when the Times are evil, is the verieſt folly in the world.*

My ſtraits of time will not allow me to enlarge upon theſe, if I would, but I have in good part touched upon the matter of them before, and I ſhall now wrap up the reſt in my Concluſory Application.

The Concluſion.

My Brethren, I have now finiſhed my Text and my Work together; for ſo it hath pleaſed God in his wiſe Providence, to order affaires, that I may not be any longer amongſt you in that capacity in which I have been. I dare not murmur nor repine: I deſire with the holy *Pſalmiſt*, to be dumb and not open my mouth, *becauſe the Lord hath done it*. Neither men, nor any other creatures can do any thing, but what God is pleaſed to permit them to do. I profeſs ſeriouſly from my ſoul, that could I have kept a good Conſcience, and my ſtation among you alſo, I do not know what good this World could afford, that could have prevailed ſo far upon my affections, as to have drawn me away from you. In that little time that the Lord hath been pleaſed to give me an abode among you, I have had very great comfort and contentment in my relation to you. I deſire to bleſs God from my heart, who hath made you teachable and tractable, willing to be inſtructed and informed; for that is my rejoycing above all other things, which will be my rejoycing in the great Day of the Lord Jeſus. Though I forget not your Love to me as your Miniſter, expreſſed in common Courteſies and Civilities, yet this is not a place and time to make mention of them: But your diligent attendance on God's Word and Ordinances in publick, your willing ſubmiſſion to private Inſtruction and Reproof, the flocking of many of you to Repetion, the chearful coming of the younger ſort to Catechiſing, and the progreſs they have made therby in the knowledge of God and Chriſt, and the way to Life; theſe things, and whatſoever good it may have pleaſed

God to have wrought in you by my poor labours among you, have been the comfort of my heart, and the remembrance of them will be my joy, when I have other ſad thoughts enough to preſs, if not oppreſs my ſpirits after this day. Well, my Glaſs is run, my time is ſhort, and I have but a few more words to ſpeak to you: I am now, for ought I know, preaching my laſt Sermon, and my face, which you have often ſeen in this Pulpit, you are never, never like to ſee here any more. I would fain ſpeak one word that might ſtick by you longer than ordinary, as the laſt words of a dying Friend are wont to do. A dying man, eſpecially a dying Father, hath commonly ſome word of advice to give to his Friends and Children about him, and ſomething to requeſt of them before he leaves the world. God hath made me in the room of a ſpiritual Father to you, and now I am as a dying Friend that muſt never ſpeak in publick to you again: I have a word of advice to give you, and ſomething to intreat of you; and this Advice and Requeſt I ſhall leave with you as my laſt Legacy.

1. My firſt Word of Advice ſhall be the ſame which the Apoſtle hath here given us in the Text, *That you would with all ſeriouſneſs, endeavour to walk circumſpectly, and to live exactly, according to the Rule of Gods Word, in performing all holy Duties that God hath required, and in avoiding all ſins that God hath forbidden.* This Advice is for your own good, and you cannot reject it, without rejecting the Command of God himſelf; and therefore I do the more earneſtly preſs it upon you. You know not what Temptations and Tryals you may come to meet withal, and therefore get it faſt fixed and rooted in your hearts and conſciences, that you ought to live exactly and ſtrictly. Perhaps the time may come when you may neglect Duties, and no

body put you in mind of them; when you may ſin freely, and none check or reprove you for it; when you may ſwear and curſe, and blaſpheme the Name of God, and be drunk and prophane the Sabbath, and have no body to tell you of your ſins, or to warn you of the danger of them: nay, perhaps you may be encouraged to theſe ſins, or perſwaded to them, or led to them by the evil example of thoſe who ſhould draw you from them; and you may be hated and reproached for *Fanaticks* and *Puritans*, and I know not what, if you make any ſcruple of running into all exceſs of riot. God forbid that this ſhould ever come to paſs; but if it ſhould, and you not have a principle of Circumſpection & Exactneſs within your own breaſts and conſciences to reſtrain you, my heart trembles to think what a ſad condition you would be in, and in how great danger you would be, of being led away with the errour of the wicked, to the utter and everlaſting undoing of your poor Souls.

Well, God write this *Memento* upon every one of your hearts and Conſciences. I beſeech you, my Brethren, for Chriſt's ſake, and for your own poor Souls ſake, that you will not ſlight or forget this Advice. Oh remember, remember I beſeech you, that it is but a little, a very little while, before you and I, and all the world ſhall meet together, and ſtand naked before the Judgement Seat of Jeſus Chriſt, to give an account of this very thing, and to anſwer to this very queſtion, Whether we have lived *circumſpectly* and *exactly* or no? Oh how ſad a thing would it be, if I ſhould meet any of you there, who having neglected this Advice, and gone on in your ſinful wayes, and lived looſely, and dyed impenitently! if I ſhould meet you (I ſay) trembling with guilt before the face of Jeſus Chriſt, and

ſhould

ſhould be neceſſitated to confeſs and ſay, Lord, theſe very men and women I did adviſe, warn, perſwade, intreat, beſeech with all ſeriouſneſs and earneſtneſs, that they would break off their ſins by repentance, and ſpend the reſt of their dayes in walking circumſpectly, and living exactly, and told them in thy Name, the danger of a looſe, careleſs, prophane and worldly life; let them now ſpeak, let their own conſciences ſay if I did not, and yet they would not hear, they would not obey. Oh, Sirs, how would you be able to look Jeſus Chriſt in the face? Nay, how would you be able to look me in the face at that day? I beſeech you think of this ſeriouſly before hand, before it be too late. I profeſs to you, your ſouls are ſo dear to me that I would not for a thouſand worlds, be your accuſer before the Judgment Seat of Jeſus Chriſt: but yet if you will not be adviſed, your blood ſhall be upon your own heads, and I ſhall be free.

I ſhall now conclude this Particular with that one word of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11, 14. *Seeing then that the Heavens, and Elements, and Earth, and all the Works that are therein, ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of Perſons ought ye to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs? Wherefore (beloved) ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Chriſt in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.*

2. The ſecond Word of Advice that I have to leave with you, I ſhall likewiſe take out of my Text; and that is, *That you would carefully redeem precious Time for God and your own poor ſouls.* A common underſtanding might eaſily ſuggeſt reaſon enough to follow this Advice. Do but conſider how little a time we have yet to live in this World, how much time we have already ſpent in vain, how ſure an account we muſt give

for

for our time as well as other talents: remember, that Eternity depends upon this moment; we owe God all our time, and we cannot lay it out better than for our poor ſouls: Eſpecially conſider this grand Argument of the Apoſtle in the Text, that *the dayes are evil.* If it be bad Weather, and an unſeaſonable Harveſt, and all the Corn upon the ground be like to be ſpoiled, the Husbandman will be ſure to raiſe the price of his good old Corn. Do but uſe the ſame Spiritual good husbandry for your ſouls. You may perhaps think that you have many years to live in the world ſtill; that is very uncertain: Oh, but however, conſider, that opportunities of doing and receiving good are few, and like to be fewer ſtill; and by how much the more rare they are, ſhall they not be the more precious with you? God in mercy prevent our fears and jealouſies, but it is too ſuſpitious that a good Sermon may be rare, a good Exhortation or Reproof may be rare, a good Miniſter may be rare, an opportunity of Chriſtian Friends praying together may be rare. Therefore redeem time while you may, lay hold upon every opportunity of good, and labour to *know in this your day the things that belong to your eternal peace, before they be hid from your eyes.* When Death comes, and Judgment comes, it will then be too late, and therefore in vain to cry out for a little more time, for one more good Sermon, for liberty of praying once more to God for Grace and Mercy.

I ſhould have enlarged my Advice in ſome particulars, of ſtrict walking and improving precious time. Pray hard; ſet up that great duty of Chriſtianity in your Families. Keep Wickedneſs not only out of your hearts and houſes, but out of the Town too, to the utmoſt

utmoſt of your power. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:* What help you want in publick, make up by your holy diligence in private. Reade the Scriptures and other good Books much. You that have learned your Catechiſm, do not forget it. Parents and Maſters, have a care of your Children and Servants. Husbands and Wives, watch over one another, provoke one another to that which is good. Neighbours, exhort and admoniſh one another; pray with and for one another, and go before one another in an holy Example. But I have not time to enumerate all.

I have now given you my Advice, and I pray God that you may follow it in truth; and now I come in the laſt place to make my laſt publick Requeſt unto you.

I bleſs God, I covet no mans Silver nor Gold; my Conſcience bears me witneſs that I have not ſought yours, but you; and now at laſt, all that I ſhall beg of you, is your prayers for me, and that I hope none of you will deny me. I have taken ſome pains among you; I have often prayed for you, and by the Grace of God ſhall never ceaſe praying for you, that the Lord would keep you from evil, and furniſh you with his Grace, and afterwards bring you to Glory. All the recompence that I ask of you, is, That you would not forget me at the Throne of Grace, but let me have a ſhare in your prayers. In many reſpects I do earneſtly and heartily beg your prayers, but I muſt not now mention them all: One is this, That God would be pleaſed to pardon my great Unfaithfulneſs and Unprofitableneſs among you. I beſeech you, Brethren, do not think that I am now complementing

menting with you. Something I have done, and God forbid that I ſhould not have ſome ground to hope that God hath bleſſed my poor Labours to the doing of ſome good amongſt you, and perhaps my weak Labours have been acceptable, yea and I bleſs God for that acceptance they have found with you; yet truly, Sirs, God knows, and mine own Conſcience tells me, that I have come much ſhort, very much ſhort of that which was my duty to have done, which if not pardoned in the Blood of Chriſt, I ſhould never be able to anſwer before God, in the day of my Accounts; and therefore I heartily beg your prayers on this behalf.

Another thing for which I beg your prayers to God for me, is, That it would pleaſe the Lord not to lay me aſide as a broken veſſel and an unprofitable creature upon the face of the Earth, but that yet, in what capacity ſoever the Lord ſees good, I may do him ſome ſervice before I go hence and be no more ſeen. I have but a little inch of time to live in this world, and my great deſire is, that while I do live, I may be uſeful; for otherwiſe life will be but a ſin, or a burden.

I beſeech you pray alſo, that I may be delivered from, or ſtrengthened under temptations. I am a poor weak creature, and cannot ſtand, but by the Grace and Strength of God, and I know not what condition the Lord hath allotted for me: Only this I have learn'd from the Word of God, that *they that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer Perſecution*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. Pray therefore that what ſufferings ſoever the Lord ſhall at any time call me to, I may be enabled by his Grace and Strength ſo to behave my ſelf under them, as that even by ſuffering I may glo-

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rifie his Name, and bear witneſs to the Truth, and practiſe what I have preached, and give a good example to others, and credit the Goſpel, and that Profeſſion which I have made thereof.

My Brethren, methinks I have much yet to ſay, and I know not where to break off, yet I muſt come to a concluſion. Leave my Work in publick I muſt, and leave you I muſt, or elſe I muſt break with God and my own Conſcience. This is my great grief, but yet it is my greateſt grief of all, that I muſt leave any unconverted ſinners amongſt you. I profeſs to you ſeriouſly, that, if I know my own heart, I could with chearfulneſs and joy forſake not only my Living and Livelihood, but even my Life alſo, ſo that I could but ſee every Drunkard, and Swearer, and Curſer, and Sabbath-breaker, and Worldling, and Prophane perſon among you, converted to a life of Faith and Holineſs.

I dare not (not onely for fear of man, but chiefly out of conſcience) I dare not open my lips to utter one word to encourage you to Faction or Schiſm, or any unquietneſs, but with the Apoſtle I exhort you, to *follow the things that make for Peace*, and to wait upon God for the mending of what is amiſs; But this I muſt tell you withall, that if you do not *follow after the things that make for Holineſs* alſo, you *ſhall never ſee the Face of God* to your comfort. Therefore follow after Holineſs; *Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good*, 3 John 11.

In the midſt of all my other griefs and troubles, I ſhall have no greater joy, than to ſee or *hear that any of you walk in the Truth.*

I have preached the Word of Truth to you, according to that underſtanding in the Scriptures which God

God hath given me. I beſeech you remember what I have ſpoken to you in the Name of God and Chriſt, and *look to your ſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.* Let me uſe the following words of the Apoſtle to you, 2 *John* 8, 9, 10, 11. *Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God: he that abideth in the Doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your houſe, neither bid him, God ſpeed. For he that biddeth him, God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*

I muſt conclude, though unwillingly: my Farewel-words to you, ſhall be the ſame with the Apoſtle's laſt Farewel to the Elders of *Epheſus*, *Acts* 20. 32. *And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.* Amen. Amen.

FINIS.
